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MARION'S
SUNDAYS

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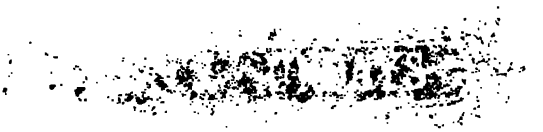

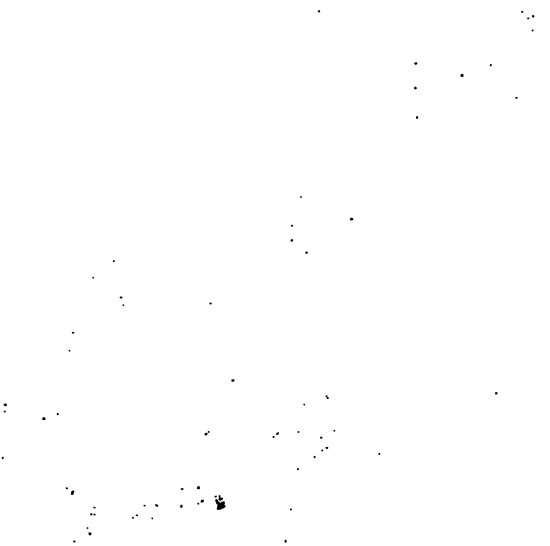

MARION'S SUNDAYS

OR,

Stories on the Ten Commandments.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—Deut. vi. 6, 7.

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FIRST SUNDAY.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

I.

Self-Worship.

"Thou shalt have none other gods but me."

IT was a sultry Sunday afternoon in summer; the sky was dazzlingly bright and blue, and the air twinkled with heat; even the deep green of the pines which inclosed the broad fields and meadows belonging to Woodlawn, the pleasant Virginia homestead to which I am taking you this very warm day, dear reader, looked tarnished in the intense glare; the leaves of the shade trees on the lawn dropped motionless and dusty; and the waters of the creek, which flowed up to the foot of the garden behind the house, flashed and glittered in the hot sunshine like a great burnished mirror, which it made one's eyes ache to look upon.

The air was full of the drowsy murmurings of insects; the shrill-voiced locusts and the busy honey-bees did not seem to be disturbed by the heat; nor did the long-legged grass-hoppers, which jumped about as merrily as ever in the dry, dusty grass; but little Marion Hunter, who was wont to skip about with them as friskily as they in the meadows, was decidedly tired out by the weather this warm afternoon, and could settle comfortably to nothing—least of all to the book that lay open on her lap.

Yet it looked very cool and inviting in the broad, open colonnade, which is always the central room in Southern houses. The branching walnut-trees, which bordered from the gate of the lawn quite up to the house, threw a refreshing shade across the uncarpeted floor of polished oak, and the great fire-place was filled with boughs of sweet-smelling myrtle and cedar. Marion's papa, who was an invalid, was taking a noon nap, lying stretched out upon a settee, with the "Church Journal" he had just been reading thrown over his face to protect it from the mosquitos which would stray in now and then. Mrs. Hunter looked very cool and comfortable in her white wrapper and smoothly

banded hair, sitting reading at one of the vine-screened windows; but poor little Marion fidgeted sadly on her ottoman, casting now weary glances on her book, and then shutting her eyes and pretending to drop into little slumbers, from which she would start half smiling, half yawning.

Presently a sigh of most desperate weariness attracted her mother's notice. She looked up from the Bible she was reading, and said, pleasantly:—

"Why, Marie, what a distressing yawn! What is the matter, my child; doesn't your lesson interest you?"

"Oh dear, mother," exclaimed the little girl, very glad to have gained her mother's attention without actually interrupting her, "I'm so tired of it; it's all explaining the commandments, and I can't half understand it; and it's so warm I can hardly breathe; and the locusts do make *such* a noise; and, oh dear, I *wish* it would rain, and make it cool!"

"And why not wish for something to make you a little more patient?" said her mother, looking at her with a little grave smile, as she went over her little grievances in a fretful tone,

and with a petulant pout spoiling the dimples of her red mouth.

Marion smiled, too, half in spite of herself, in answer to the pleasant look; and laying her face, coloring a little with confusion, in her mother's lap, said more good-naturedly:—

"Ah, well, dear mother, it is very tiresome going over all these Sunday lessons by myself. I wish it wasn't so far to the church, so that I could go to the Sunday-school. And I have to do all my week-day lessons alone, too. If we only lived in the town, why then I could be in a class of little girls—not all alone!"

"And what would become then of the pony-rides, and the long rambles in search of wild-flowers and berries, and the sails at sunset on the lake, that you like so well, Marie?" asked her mother. "I don't like to hear you make so many wishes, daughter; I would rather see you 'content with such things as you have,' as St. Paul bids us all be. And I'm especially sorry that you find your Sunday lessons so tedious; surely, you would not wish to read story books, or play, all the time on God's day? and I know you would not like to grow up knowing scarcely

anything about His Book. I am always willing to help you in your difficulties."

"I know you are, dear mother, and I wouldn't give up my Sunday lessons for anything!" said Marion, warmly; "only it *would* be nicer to have a sister to study with me, wouldn't it, mother? and to-day is so warm, I *should* like it to rain, to have a splendid thunder-shower! and these questions on the commandments *are* pretty dull—not nice like the *story* part about the little children that were killed, and the Red Sea, and all; and, dear mother, if you would only tell me a *story* about them, I think I should understand a great deal better. Don't *you*, mother?"

Mrs. Hunter smiled down into the bright eager face uplifted to hers; she was amused in spite of herself, and put away her grave look as she stroked back the moist and tumbled curls that had fallen about the child's flushed temples.

"I don't see what it is you find so hard to understand, Marie," said she; "tell me your difficulty."

"Oh, I don't know myself, mother," said Marion, impatiently, "only here's a whole page about the first commandment and it's fine print,

and looks so hard; and I didn't read it, for what's the use? We are Christians—we would never think of worshipping another god like the heathen—would we, mother?"

Mrs. Hunter shook her head gravely: "No wonder you could not understand it, Marion, when you have not even read it. It would have explained to you that there are other gods, which people calling themselves Christians worship, besides the idols of wood and stone which pagans bow down to."

"Are there, mother, really?" asked Marion eagerly, omitting to notice, in her suddenly awakened interest, the reproof conveyed in her mother's grave look. "Do tell me about them, mother—do, pray, put up the book and explain them all to me yourself, you can do it so much better; and next Sunday I'll study *hard*—if it isn't so warm—if you'll only talk to me now, mother."

There was no resisting the eloquent pleading of the child's earnest tone, and tired, flushed face; so her mother laid aside the book which had proved too abstract for her little daughter's languid mind this sultry afternoon, and, smoothing her bright, disordered hair with her hand as she spoke, said kindly—

"Well, I will tell you a story, then, of a little girl not much older than yourself, who worshipped another than the true and living God, and you shall find out for yourself what it was. And hereafter, on Sunday, if you will be very attentive to the comments your Question-Book makes on the other commandments, I will promise to add *my* explanations to them also. How will that do, Marie?"

"Oh, that will be very pleasant, mother!" said the child eagerly, settling her head comfortably in her mother's lap, so that she could watch her face with her bright, listening eyes; and Mrs. Hunter, smiling gravely a moment, commenced:—

"Charlotte Staunton was a schoolfellow of mine, Marion, long ago, when I was no older than yourself—"

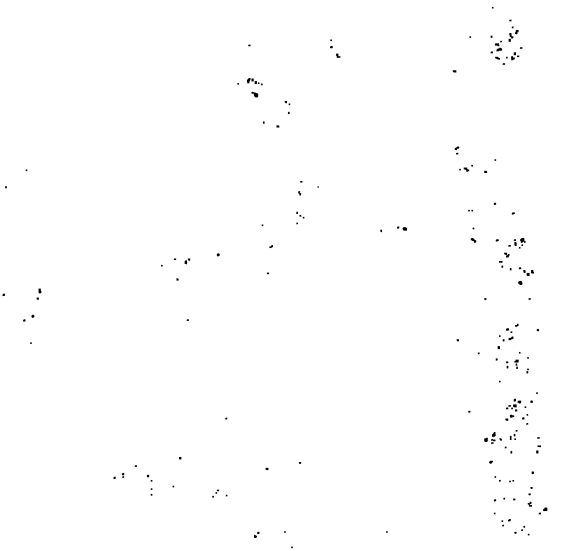
"Then you were just eleven, mother," interrupted Marion; and her mother went on:

"But although we were in the same classes, and lived very near each other, we were never very intimate; indeed, I do not remember that she ever had any very warm friends at school. And yet she was very pretty, and not ill-tempered, and stood well in her classes. She had a sister

whom we all loved dearly—little Lizzie, a quiet, affectionate child, who never was disagreeable to any one. Charlotte knew very well that Lizzie was much more of a favorite in school than she herself was; and she wondered vainly why it should be so, when she was older, and handsomer, and a much more amusing companion.

"But we girls had often discussed the difference between the sisters among ourselves, as children will talk about their playmates, and we knew very well the reason why we loved Lizzie best, though Charlotte wondered contemptuously 'what we could see in such a stupid little chit as that!'

"We did not at all like the way in which she treated her gentle little sister; we all saw how she made her wait upon her, continually sending her back and forwards from the playground to the school-room, for books, or skipping-ropes, or grace-hoops; and we knew that she never even helped her to carry the heavy dinner-basket all the long mile between their home and the school-house; but we had no right to interfere other than by an occasional word of deprecation, which Charlotte always either laughed off, or resented.



THE FIRST SUNDAY.

"One day, however, I remember we held a regular indignation-meeting, as a group of us, all friends, were sitting under the trees behind the school-house, eating our lunch, and chattering school-girl gossip. Ellen Lloyd, one of our set, was telling us what a specimen of Charlotte's selfishness she had just witnessed, as she passed her desk in going for her own dinner-basket.

"'Could you believe it, girls,' said she, in a voice of generous indignation, 'there was Charlotte lounging in the most luxurious manner possible on a pile of wrappings she had spread on her desk, while that dear little Lizzie stood by her side holding the basket for her to choose from. And I heard her say, 'There, Lizzie, let me have both those slices of cake; you know I'm devoted to plum-cake, and it's too rich for you—don't you think so?' and Lizzie smiled and said, 'Yes,' and so Charlotte took them both; and then she said, 'And you don't care for chestnuts, do you? I ate them nearly all in school, when Mr. Blackstone wasn't looking. Now you may take the basket away; there are some sandwiches in it for you—I'll take the chicken and biscuit.' And so Lizzie went away, without a word, to

eat her bread and ham; and presently Charlotte called her to bring her a glass of water; and she did it at once, only saying, playfully, 'You lazy sister!' and that's the way she always does, and Mrs. Staunton never knows it!

"Ellen stopped, quite breathless with her indignant earnestness, and we all cried, 'Shame!'

"'Yes, but it's almost the same at home, and I don't know how she can manage to deceive her mother,' said another girl; 'but Lizzie loves her so, she never complains. They have a room together, and Charlotte always persuades Lizzie to dust the furniture, and arrange the books on the shelves; and she makes her get into bed first, so as to warm the sheets in the winter nights; and in the morning Lizzie always laces her corsets and hooks her dress for her, and so Charlotte gets praised for being down first. I know all these things, because I live so near, and often pass the night with them; I know it isn't right to talk so about people, but really, if Charlotte is so mean she deserves to have it told.'

"'Poor girl! she has another god before HIM,' said Lucy Selwyn, whom we always called the *good* girl of the school: 'but still

it isn't right for us to judge others—maybe we have faults just as bad.'

"Just then the bell rang, and we all went in, and dropped Charlotte for that time.

"A few evenings after that, while we were all in school, a thunder-cloud came up, black and heavy—just what you want to see now, Marie; and, indeed, I believe your desire will be gratified: see how dark the sky is growing in the west yonder, and what a shadow has fallen on the water!"

"Yes, I do believe it too, mother, and I'm so glad! but do please go on, mother," said Marion, too much interested in the story to attend to anything else; and Mrs. Hunter proceeded:—

"Well, before the hour of dismissal it burst in a tremendous shower; and then arose a difficulty about getting home. We waited some time, and at last those who lived near decided to run home as fast as they could; among them was Charlotte, and she persisted in going, though Lizzie, who with her gentleness was very timid, and dreaded a thunder-storm, begged her to wait till their father should send for them.

"'I have no patience with such a little

coward!' said Charlotte, angrily; 'so just come along, or I shall leave you to come alone, and then you *will* be afraid.' And away she ran, while Lizzie, frightened and distressed, hurried after her, although we advised her to remain with us. The thunder burst in fearful crashes, and the lightning was intensely vivid. It was almost as dark as night in the wood through which they had to pass; and at last poor Lizzie, completely overcome with terror and exhaustion, leaned against a tree, declaring she could go no farther.

"'Just as you like,' said Charlotte, 'only I sha'n't wait in the rain for you,' and she hurried on; so the child, nerved by her fear, struggled on through the storm, rushed past her sister, and fell half fainting, and sobbing bitterly, into the arms of her father, who was just coming out of the door to go to the school-house for them. He reproved both the girls for coming out in such a storm: and Lizzie said nothing of Charlotte's obstinacy—only complained of a headache, and said she would go and lie down. The next morning she awoke shaking with ague, and, when the physician came, he said she would have a severe bilious fever. Still Charlotte did

not seem to care particularly about it, or to feel in the least self-reproached, and paid grudgingly any little attention her mother required for her sister.

"One day Mrs. Staunton was obliged to be absent for several hours, and left Charlotte to administer Lizzie's medicine; it was to be given in very small quantities, at intervals of half an hour; and Charlotte thought this was a useless trouble. Besides, the sick child's moaning and tossings were annoying to her heartless sister; and she presently took a book, and, going to her own room, lay down on the sofa to read, thinking she could remember when to give the medicine. Her position was so comfortable, however, that she fell asleep; and, springing up after a long nap, she ran into Lizzie's room, and persuaded her that it was time to take *all* her medicine; which the poor child did, unsuspectingly.

"Charlotte thought that her wicked neglect would thus remain undiscovered; but alas! it was only too shockingly revealed. The powerful dose acted almost as poison. Poor Lizzie was raving in delirium when her mother returned; and when the doctor came, at a hurried sum-

mons, he pronounced her in the greatest danger, and insisted upon it that *something* must have been done amiss, to produce such a fearful change in so brief a time. Mrs. Staunton was excessively alarmed, and questioned Charlotte very closely as to the way in which she had fulfilled her directions; and the wretched girl, overwhelmed with terror and remorse at the thought that she would perhaps be the cause of her gentle little sister's death, acknowledged her selfish neglect, and the rash way in which she had attempted to conceal it.

"She was so truly miserable about it, that her parents forebore to reproach her, though they were shocked at the revelation of her heartlessness. All thought and care were given up to Lizzie; Charlotte haunted her bedside day and night, with such a pale, pitiful face, that no one could have the heart to reproach her: and at last their earnest prayers and devoted cares were repaid by the recovery of the dear little girl, almost from the grave.

"How delighted we all were to welcome her back to school! and for her sake we still managed to be kind to Charlotte, until, by and by, as we saw how much all this bitter experience

had changed her, we grew to like her much better than ever before. She never seemed to think she could do enough for Lizzie to expiate her former unkindness. The God whom she had never truly worshipped before, taught her, by this merciful lesson, to love both 'her brother whom she *had* seen, and then her God whom she had *not* seen.'"

"I know what god she had worshipped before, mother!" here interrupted Marion with an eager voice—"*herself!*"

"Yes, daughter," said Mrs. Hunter, with a grave smile; "and now that you see how *selfishness* is idolatry, I hope you will try never to yield to it. We break the first commandment whenever we love and desire *anything* more than God; and are more wicked than the heathen, who know no better than to bow down to blocks of wood and stone, when we make idols to ourselves out of earthly things, and let worldly pleasure, or gain, or ease, crowd out the thought of God from our hearts. Do you understand now, Marie?"

"Yes, dear mother, and thank you for telling me;" said the little girl, putting up her mouth for a kiss; "but listen, mother! what is that?

thunder, surely—and we shall have the shower after all! I'm so glad!"

"I think we shall, Marion," said her mother, smiling at her eagerness, as she took up her Bible again; and Marion sprang to the window to watch the blackening cloud, and catch the first heavy drop in her rosy little palm.

SECOND SUNDAY.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

II.

Idolatry.

WHEN the next Sunday afternoon came round, Marion remembered to get her book of Bible questions without being reminded, as she often had to be by her mother, and was seated on her little low chair by the open door of the colonnade, reading busily, before Mrs. Hunter had finished attending to little Theo, Marion's baby brother, up in the nursery. She came down when she had laid him in his crib for his afternoon nap, leaving Hepsey, his little nut-brown nurse, to watch by him, with her brush of peacock feathers, lest the intrusive flies should disturb his pretty slumber.

Marion looked up eagerly as her mother entered the room.

"I know the second commandment quite by heart," she said at once, "and I have read the

explanation in my book; but still I can't exactly understand how to take it. Why we, mother—you and father—have pictures and busts, and seem to think so much of them; and I know *you* wouldn't do anything wrong! And you like to have me learn to draw; and all my books have engravings in them, and *they* are likenesses of things in heaven and earth; and the statuettes and bronzes in the parlor are 'graven images!'"

Mrs. Hunter smiled.

"Yes, certainly, dear, I should be very sorry, and so would your papa and all lovers of the beautiful, to be without such pleasant and refined and refining things as pictures, and other works of art, and be still more sorry to do what is wrong! But you have mistaken the meaning of the command, Marie. Our wise and loving Father never intended to deprive us of the enjoyment of so pure and elevating a thing as art; it is He Himself who inspires the wonderful genius which creates such exquisite imitations of His own beautiful works. He only forbids us to bow down and *worship* them; to render homage to things created, instead of the Creator; to desert the

living God, and hew out for ourselves idols from wood and stone.

"You have read how displeased God was with the Israelites when they set up a golden calf in the wilderness and worshipped it; and how the three Hebrew children were miraculously preserved from the raging heat of the fiery furnace because of their steady refusal to kneel before the image which Nebuchadnezzar exalted as a god; and you remember what Mr. Corcoran, the missionary who lectured at our church last winter, told you of the sad condition of the thousands of heathen in different parts of the world, who have never heard of the true God, and of the good and gentle Jesus, whom little Christian children love, but who bend the knee to idols which are the work of their own hands.

"This is what our Father meant in uttering this command; that we should not *worship* these images, not that we should not create them to adorn our homes, and cultivate our taste by the presence of beauty and genius which He inspires."

Marion sat very still for a few moments, looking thoughtfully out of the open door,

where the shadows and sunshine chased each other over the velvety greensward of the lawn. Presently she said, earnestly—

"Mother, it seems *very strange* that any one should worship any other god than the one you have always taught me to love. I can't fancy any one praying to any one else. How strange it must have seemed to Mr. Corcoran when he travelled in those savage islands, to see the people kneeling before those ugly images! Did *you*, mother, ever see any one who worshipped another god—I don't mean *loved* something else better than God, like Charlotte Staunton—but who really *prayed* to any one else? Are there any people in this country who do, mother?"

Mrs. Hunter paused, and sighed deeply, before she replied.

"Your question, Marion," said she, "has awakened a memory that has long lain silent in my heart. Yes, I once knew such an one, an idolater. She was a young girl, of my own age, whom I knew at school some years after my acquaintance with Charlotte Staunton. She was not a native of this country; her mother died when she was a little baby, and her father

brought her to America from Italy a year or two before I knew her. I remember very well the first day she came to school, how painfully shy and timid she seemed; and yet how strangely beautiful we thought her, with her great dark eyes, and braids of heavy black hair, and odd, half-foreign dress. We looked at her a great deal, and I am afraid embarrassed her by our continual notice. At our play-hour we could talk of nothing else but the new scholar, and offered her all manner of girlish attentions; but she was very shy, and only smiled and blushed, and answered in little short sentences of the prettiest broken English, when we talked to her.

"Mr. Blackstone chanced to give her a desk near mine, and we soon became firm friends and constant companions. The other girls complained, playfully, that I cared for no one now but this pretty Florentine—this Cecilia Caroli, as she was called. All the school loved her, for that matter; for she was gentle and loving herself, and her genius was as remarkable as her beauty. Such a glorious voice she had! It was our dearest pleasure, as we gathered together under the trees at intermission, to listen

to her, singing the sweet melodies of her own sunny Italy; she poured forth the most exquisite music with perfect ease and grace, and with a modest unconsciousness of her wonderful power, that lent it an additional charm. I shall never forget the delicious enjoyment of those summer noons, under the shade of the great dark pines whose spicy perfume filled the air, with the glorious southern sky above us, and that heavenly melody breathing around. Cecilia herself used often to say, that our land was *almost* as lovely as Italy!

"Her talent for painting was as fine as for music. She had the soul of an artist, young as she was; and after she joined the school, the rest of us never thought of carrying off a premium for drawing at the examinations. Yet she was so modest and unobtrusive, and so kind in helping us with our little pictures, that we never could feel in the least envious of her superiority.

"Once as we walked home together, after school, I was telling her how much I admired a little sketch she had made that afternoon, of the brook, with the water falling over an old mossy log, and the holly and myrtle trees crowding thickly on its banks, while it threaded its bright

way through the wood behind the school-house; she smiled at my enthusiasm, and said, in her musical broken English, that she did not know how much I loved pictures before; that hers were poor things; but if I would go with her to her father's studio, she would show me some that *were* worthy of my admiration.

"I knew before that her father was an artist. It was on account of the beautiful scenery around Stanhope that he had opened a studio in our unpretending little town; and I was sure my mother would not object to my going. So I assented eagerly, and turned with her down the long village street, till we reached her home. It was a curious, high, old-fashioned house; and she led me up flight after flight of stairs, quite to the top of the house, into a strange, shadowy, skylight room, which was her father's painting-room.

"A strange sensation came over me as I entered; there seemed to be an air of mystery and gloom over the place; the walls were covered with unframed pictures; pencils and palettes were scattered round; beautiful statues gleamed white from the dusky recesses; there was a set of shelves crowded with quaint-looking

books in foreign tongues; a low couch was strewn with engravings and pencil sketches, and at an easel in the midst sat Signor Caroli, painting. He turned round as we came in, and Cecilia presented me to him; he saluted me briefly, but his face grew very bright as he answered her smile. He was a tall, dark man, with a grave face, which the shadow of his black velvet cap made almost stern. I stood silent, watching curiously the rapid progress of his pencil as he added a touch here and there to the unfinished landscape on the easel; and presently Cecilia spoke a few words to him in their own language, and then drew me quite down to the end of the long room, where a curtain fell from the ceiling to the floor. This she drew aside, and revealed a little inner room, on whose wall hung a single large picture.

"'Here,' said she, 'look at this, our pride, our love! This spot is holy ground to us; here we think—we pray!'

"I did not answer, for I was breathless with admiration. It seemed to be rather a living, breathing woman than a picture, which stood in the centre of the massive frame—so life-like was the coloring, so true to nature the form and

attitude. An exquisite child sat on the floor, his dimpled hands half hidden in the snowy plumage of a dove which nestled in his bosom, and his heavenly eyes uplifted to meet his mother's smile.

"I stood silent, with excess of emotion; and presently Cecilia spoke, in a low voice:

"'My father intended it for the Madonna and the child Jesus,' said she; 'but he painted it from my mother and my little baby-brother as copies; and after *they* died, he always called it *their* pictures. And I—ah, how I love it! I love my mother and the blessed Virgin both tenfold more from thinking of them together through this picture; I believe the holy Mary takes especial charge of her in heaven. Ah, blessed Virgin, holy Mother!' she exclaimed, her face all glowing, and her beautiful eyes suffused with tears; and throwing herself prostrate before the picture—'Sweet Queen of Heaven, bless thy faithful child, and let her love for thee bring her to thee, and thy friend, her mother, in Paradise at last!'

"I listened, inexpressibly shocked,—this was so solemn, yet so wrong—so earnest, yet so sinful.

THE PICTURE OF THE MADONNA.

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"'Oh, Cecilia, don't, I beg of you!' I exclaimed, endeavoring to raise her from her knees—'*Please* get up!' but she waved me decidedly away, and poured forth a long, passionate prayer, in which she lavished the most exalted, the most endearing epithets upon the *Mother*—the human mother of Jesus, but made no mention of the glorious Son, the only name under heaven by which we may be saved. I stood silent and distressed, and presently she rose, and, putting her arms affectionately about me, begged me to forgive her for yielding to her feelings so in my presence. It was growing dark, and I wanted to be alone to think over all this strange experience; so I said I must hasten home, and kissed her good-by.

"After that there was always a painful feeling blending with the love I felt for Cecilia. She sang for me, made me sketches, and talked to me for hours of her old home in beautiful Florence, on the sunny banks of the Arno.

"I always longed to speak to her on the one great subject in which I knew she had made the grand mistake of her life; and once I summoned courage to do it. We had a long, earnest talk; I implored her never again to pray to Mary,

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pure and lovely virgin though she was, saint in rest though she is; I repeated texts from the Bible which plainly showed the sin of such prayers, and used every persuasion, every argument at my command. But she heard me with such bitter pain! I was evidently wounding her feelings; and she pleaded so passionately that I would never again try to unsettle her childhood's faith, the faith of her *dead mother*, that I was constrained to cease. I was then but a child, and did not feel as I ought to have done that it was better that my friend's feelings should be hurt for a little, than that her soul should be lost for ever.

"Poor Cecilia! a few months after this her father made up his mind to return to his native land, and we were obliged to part; but our friendship ended only with her life. We wrote to each other regularly; but one day my father brought me a foreign letter, superscribed in a strange, masculine hand. I tore it open with a sad foreboding; it contained only a few quiet lines from Signor Caroli, telling me that my friend was dead."

Marion drew a long breath, and sat quite still. Her mother's voice had grown tremulous,

and her eyes were moist. Presently the child lifted up her face, and pressed a quiet kiss upon the lips which smiled back to her, and then went away quite quietly, respecting her mother's feeling; and Mrs. Hunter's eyes followed her retreating figure with a look of tender love.

THIRD SUNDAY.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

III.

Eleanor's Lesson.

"MOTHER," said Marion, the next Sunday, when they had taken possession of their accustomed seats—Mrs. Hunter in her light rocking-chair, and Marion on an ottoman by her side—"Mother, the third commandment isn't meant for *us*, is it? only for bad boys and men; for *we* don't swear."

Mrs. Hunter smiled a moment, and then said, gravely, "Yes, Marion, all the commandments are meant for all of us; and the Lord's name can be profaned in many other ways than by using oaths. I am afraid we all take it in vain, sometimes, Marion."

"Why, mother!" began Marion, in surprise; and Mrs. Hunter went on:

"We take the holy name in vain whenever

we use it unnecessarily or thoughtlessly. You, Marion, speak it every morning and night when you kneel; but do you always pray, or only 'say your prayers?' Do you always feel that you are really in the presence of God, and speaking to Him? and do you address Him as earnestly and reverently as if you could see Him in His glory, or as you would if you realized that He were looking at and listening to you? Don't you often pray to Him with your lips when your heart is far from Him, your thoughts wandering on your books or your play?—Well, Marion, you break the third commandment whenever you thus take 'solemn sounds upon a thoughtless tongue.'"

"I never thought of it so, mother," said Marion, in a low voice.

"But you will try hereafter, dear, I hope. When you kneel to pray, think exactly what you want, and ask God for it, no matter how small it be. No prayer is beneath His gracious notice, if it be offered in faith and humility. But it is most ungrateful to His kindness to mutter over a few hasty petitions, scarcely knowing what you say, or caring whether He hears you or not, and calling on His glorious

name in an indifferent, irreverent way. When you wish your papa to grant you any favor, no one knows better than you, little Marie, how to win him to listen. What coaxing smiles, what loving words you use! what perfect trust you have in his wish to make you happy! And when you have offended him in any way, how restless and uneasy you are till you have won his forgiveness! Or, when he brings you a new book, or any token of his affection, how pleasantly you thank him, and love him more and more!—don't you, Marie?"

The little girl looked up brightly: "Yes, indeed, mother! Papa is the dearest, best—except you, mother," she added, eagerly. "Indeed, I do not know which I love best."

"Well, my daughter, that is the way God likes us to approach Him—as children to a Father able and willing to help us; and if we always address Him in this earnest, loving way, we shall be in no danger of breaking the third commandment by using His name irreverently. I know it is hard, Marie, very hard, always to control wandering thoughts, and to think of our Father so far away, in the same manner as of an earthly parent whom we can see face to face.

But you know there is no glory in winning an easy victory; and if we persevere, He will help us to see Him plainly, with the eye of Faith. We will try, after this, not to use His name thoughtlessly in prayer again—won't we, Marie?"

"Yes, mother," said the child, seriously.

"But there are other ways in which we violate this command," resumed Mrs. Hunter. "Most little girls and boys have a great many exclamations and phrases, which are not only coarse and unrefined, but really sinful. I have heard you sometimes say 'Good gracious!' or 'Mercy!' or 'My goodness!' Now who is 'gracious goodness' if it be not God, for who else is good? Not one. And 'O heavens!' some say, which are His throne; or 'My soul!' which ought to be a temple for His indwelling. Don't you see, Marion?"

"Yes, mother, but I'm afraid I never shall be able to break myself of saying those; they come so easily—"

"You can struggle against the habit at least; remember, that we are commanded to let our communication be 'Yea, yea, and Nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these

cometh of evil.' I do not despair of you, Marion —only try."

Marion drew a long sigh; at which her mother smiled pleasantly, and said,—

"You begin to think now that this commandment was intended for you also, do you, though you do not swear? But, my dear, all children have not been brought up as carefully, even in that respect, as you; and I have known girls, proud and refined enough in other things, who did not scruple actually to swear and curse, dreadful as it seems!"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Marion, in amazement! "do tell me about them! You haven't given me any story yet, you know."

"And I really have no story to give, little girl," said her mother. "I should not even let you know that *girls*, who should be ever gentle and delicate in speech and manner, could be guilty of such wickedness, if I were not afraid that you might learn it in a less guarded way in the mixed throng of a school—perhaps be in danger of being yourself beguiled into the same habit by the power of association, as I was tempted, when a child at school, myself.

"There was one of the girls—Eleanor Thorn-

ton, by name—a brilliant, handsome creature. who indulged in this sad habit. She was a daughter of Squire Thornton, as he was called, one of the wealthiest men in the county, who was devoted to horses and hounds, and gave dinners to his sporting friends, where a great deal of wine was drunk, and a great many oaths were used. Eleanor was so accustomed to hear her father swear, that she had fallen into a very strong way of speaking, herself. She would confirm every declaration with 'I swear it is so,' and the slightest surprise or fright would draw from her an exclamation of 'Good God!' We girls used to be very much shocked at first; and some of us, to the last, used to plead with Eleanor, and threaten to avoid her altogether if she did not leave off the wicked and disgusting habit. But she was such a gay, spirited girl, that she remained popular in spite of her fault; and the danger began to be, not so much that she would be neglected and deserted, as that the rest of us should be beguiled into the same sin by constant intercourse with our brilliant and warm-hearted leader, whom we could not help both admiring and loving.

"It was all very suddenly ended, however. At our play hour, one day, as we were all gathered about the school-house, taking our lunch, a couple of itinerant musicians—a man with a hand organ and monkey, and a woman with a tambourine, came up and began to play. They looked very picturesque in their strange, foreign costume, and with their swarthy faces; so we drew near and called for our favorite tunes, to which we listened with great delight. After they had finished, they of course came forward and held out their hands for money. Of this we had not thought, and none of us chanced to have any. We offered them, however, some of our tarts and cakes; but they became very much enraged, and, finding we were really not going to give them money, they began to curse and swear in much better English than their appearance betokened they could use.

"We were very much frightened, and very indignant, and were hurrying to the house as fast as we could; but Eleanor stopped, with her face crimson with anger, and answered them haughtily, commanding them to be gone in an instant. But the vagabonds, looking around

and seeing no one but groups of children, whom they thought they could insult with impunity, only redoubled their insolent abuse, until Eleanor lost all control over herself in her rage, and, swearing at them in terrible wrath, ordered them again to quit the spot instantly.

"The altercation had grown so loud and angry that it reached Mr. Blackstone's ear, as he sat writing at his desk, and he came to the door to see what was the cause of the disturbance just in time to hear Eleanor's profane and unlady-like language. He was shocked beyond all measure, and extremely indignant; he ordered the musicians away instantly, and assembled the school. I shall never forget the awful way in which he talked to her, nor how distressed we all felt. It cured Eleanor completely; she was overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and sobbed bitterly all the time he was talking to her, and finally rushed up to him in her usual impulsive way, and implored him to forgive her, promising never so to forget herself again. And after school was dismissed, and we were all in the entry putting on our bonnets, she said, in her comical way, half laughing, half crying—

"'Do, girls, take me to the brook and duck me, as they did to scolds in old times, if you ever hear me swear again!'

"But we never did, Marie, though I have known other young girls besides Eleanor to be guilty of this sinful and shameful practice. And, for fear you might some day be thrown among such, I wished to put you on your guard, lest, possibly, you might insensibly fall into the same wickedness. Not that I think there is much probability of it, my little daughter, but it is well to be warned against all danger. And now, hark! isn't that little brother's voice? Won't you go and bring him to mamma? but give me my 'story-kiss' first. There, now run away!"

FOURTH SUNDAY.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

IV.

Profaning the Lord's Day.

IT was very quiet and pleasant in the airy colonnade this Sunday afternoon, after Marion and her mother returned, from church. A cool wind stirred the leaves of the walnut-trees, and made the shadows wave dreamily on the polished floor; the sweet breath of summer roses came in from the vines wreathed about the windows; and you could hear the tiny waves of the little inlet breaking softly upon the sands.

Marion and her mamma were quite alone in the pleasant open room. The little girl's face was very thoughtful; her book lay open on her lap but she was not looking at it; there was a strange expression in her eyes, more as if she were gazing down into *her own heart*, than if as noting any outward object.

Presently she lifted her head, and said, very gravely—

"Mother, don't you think the fourth commandment is very, very hard to keep? Do you believe any one ever does it?"

"I hope so, Marion," answered Mrs. Hunter, gravely; "and I don't know that I find it much more difficult than the others. It requires constant watching and prayer, you know, to enable us to remember always, and faithfully obey, any of the divine instructions; and the grace obtained by this prayer and watchfulness will assist us as much in fulfilling this commandment as the others."

"Yes, mother, I know," said Marion, despondingly; "but still, this seems the hardest to me. Since we've been having these nice Sunday afternoons, mother, and I've thought more about the commandments than I ever did before, I've been trying so much every week to keep the one we had talked about that Sunday, and not forget the others either. This week I had not forgotten to pray about it every day, and I so hoped that I should not break one all the week; and I almost dared to believe I had not, until to-day; and to-day, mother, spoiled

all! The whole time of church I was looking at Jennie Seymour's new bonnet, and wishing you would get me one like it; and when we were in the vestibule after service, I asked her if it came from Mrs. Fanning's, in Leigh, and how she happened to have a new one in the middle of the summer; and she told me about a new blue grenadine she had to wear with it, and all that. I knew it wasn't keeping the Lord's Day holy to talk about such things; but still I kept on, and that made me feel unhappy; and I couldn't tell papa a word of the sermon, or even the text, and he was displeased; and when I went up to the nursery to see Theo, Dido had given him one of my nice books to play with, and he had torn out half the leaves; and I scolded her, and spoke so crossly to him that he cried: and so it goes!"

Marion had spoken hurriedly, half ashamed, and half impatient, with a flushed cheek, and eyes in which a shower was rapidly coming up. Mrs. Hunter looked both pleased and pained; she took hold of the little hand that fidgeted in her lap, and said, gently,—

"I am glad, very glad and thankful, to know that my little daughter is trying to ponder these

things in her heart, that she may learn to walk in the law of the Lord; and sorry, too, that she allowed her vanity—was it, Marion?—to lead her astray to-day. But she knows where to seek forgiveness and assistance; and next week she must watch and pray still more, and God will surely give the grace she asks for."

"Yes, mother," said Marion, humbly; "but still I am afraid I shall never learn to be good all day on Sunday. Did you, mother, when you were a little girl like me?"

"Not always, Marie," was Mrs. Hunter's grave reply. "I made a great many attempts and failures, like you. It was very hard to keep in a proper spirit all day—'be good,' as you call it; and after school and church were over, and I had read my library-book, the long afternoon was very tedious, when I began to feel that it was wrong to talk and think of week-day matters. And once I profaned the day so openly, so flagrantly, and suffered so much for it, that it made me very careful ever after for myself, and even now for my children. I will tell you about it, Marie, by way of encouragement to you, though it is still a very painful memory to me."

"If you please, mother," said Marion, softly; and Mrs. Hunter began:

"I was never a strong, lively child like you, Marion; and when I was near your age my mother grew really alarmed about me, I was so thin, and had so little activity; and she was afraid I would grow up delicate and nervous, or be grave and unchildlike, for I had neither brothers nor sisters as companions. So she and my father arranged that I should pay a visit of several months to an aunt, who lived by the sea-shore, that the salt breeze and the companionship of my cousins might combine to make me strong and cheerful.

"My uncle and aunt had often visited us, and I was very fond of them, but scarcely knew my cousins at all: still I anticipated a very pleasant visit; and after the parting from home was over, and the tedious journey, and the first strange feeling, I grew very happy, and the time passed away delightfully at my aunt's house.

"It was such a new pleasure to me to have companions of my own age; and I did not know whether I loved best Ada, or Sophie, or Helen. Clement was a merry, spirited boy, and Jamie

and Louie very nice children. We had charming rambles about the beach in search of shells and sea-weeds; and through the woods, to gather pine-cones and acorns to make little baskets and frames for the crosses and stars which we constructed out of the beautiful mosses that grew everywhere, covering every old stump and rock with velvet. We gathered the brilliant holly-berries to string into mock-coral necklaces for baby Nellie's dainty throat, and wove countless garlands of wild-flowers for our own adornment; there was no end to the devices we had for filling up the bright hours, which slipped away too fast for us after all.

"There were carriage-parties and horseback excursions, moonlight sails and surf-bathing, arranged expressly for us; for aunt excused us almost entirely from lessons, while I was there, in her anxiety that I should return home quite well, with plenty of strength and spirits. I thought country life vastly preferable to our quiet town routine, and soon grew almost as wild and healthy as my cousins. The days flew by delightfully; and Sunday made little difference in our occupations. It was very strange, at first, to see uncle and aunt go to

church and leave almost all the children at home; though, for the first two or three weeks, they always took me and one of my cousins in turn. The church was several miles distant, and the carriage would only hold four; and besides, there was almost always some grown-up guest staying at the plantation, who would, of course, be preferred to us. I wondered that my cousins never seemed to regret it, and rather liked staying at home; but one Sunday, when there were several guests to occupy the carriage, and I, too, was obliged to remain behind, I discovered the reason of their willing submission. They had the whole house to themselves, and could play and romp to their full satisfaction, without restraint from the presence of older persons; and they had been so accustomed to spending Sunday at home, under the care of old Pleasance, the nurse, that they had been accustomed to look forward to it as the freest and gayest day of the week.

"It was before I had any very serious thoughts on the subject,—but it was very different from the quiet Sundays we had at home, and I knew it was not right, though I did not see how uncle and aunt could very well help it. For a long

time I resisted their entreaties to join them in their wild play, their running and romping through the house, and their loud laughing and talking. I took a book from the library, and went up to my own room to read; but they discovered my retreat, and laughed at me so unmercifully, and begged me so heartily to join them, and seemed all so merry and good-humored, that I yielded to their persuasions, and went with them down to the beach to search for some beautiful shells which the tide had floated up that morning.

"So the day wore away. The presence of company prevented my aunt from hearing us say the verses and hymn she usually required of us on Sunday afternoon; and, though my conscience reproached me a good deal that night, the next day's busy pleasure lulled it to sleep. Next Sunday I did not need so much persuasion to join my cousins, for Clement had promised to row us out to a little island not very far from the shore, where were to be found the most beautiful sea-grasses in the world, he said!

"And thus it happened, that almost every Lord's day passed in some such way. Aunt was quite satisfied that old Pleasance would

take good care of us; and as no accident ever happened, she made no inquiries into our morning pursuits. Meanwhile I grew quite careless of my old Sunday duties, and thought it perfectly harmless to amuse ourselves in any innocent way, such as walking, or playing, forgetting that amusement was not the purpose of the day. I made a point of studying my hymn and text well and cheerfully, and thought that sufficient, and that I was much better than my cousins, who often murmured at what they called those dull afternoons.

"So the period of my visit slipped away, and my father arrived to take me home. He was delighted to find me looking so healthy and strong, and seemed very well pleased that he was to have his little girl back again. I was glad, too, at the thought of seeing my mother, though sorry enough to part from my cousins, who clung round me, begging me to remain with them always. I missed them sadly after the first pleasure of getting home again had worn off. It was so quiet all the week, and the Sundays seemed especially dull. I could see, too, that, happy as my mother was to have me back again with her, looking so well and rosy, there

was something with which she was dissatisfied; and I often noticed her eyes fixed upon me with an anxious, pained glance, which I was at a loss to understand. I should have been very much shocked if I could have read her meaning, and known that she almost regretted the exchange I had made of my thoughtfulness and reverence for bloom and animation.

"She could not but perceive my impatience of Sunday restraints, my inattention in church, and weariness during the afternoon readings, and it made her very sad to mark the change; but she did not speak to me directly on the subject, and it went on until one Sunday—the *black* day of my childhood, Marie.

"It was the day before my mother's birthday. I had been very busy for two weeks in every leisure moment, crocheting a pair of dressing-slippers as my gift to her; but as it was a great secret, I could only take them up a few minutes at a time to avoid her notice; and, despite my assiduous industry, twelve o'clock on Saturday night found them still unfinished. I had sat up toiling patiently thus late, and now it was Sunday morning; and moreover, my heavy eyes refused to continue their task any longer. Mon-

day was my mother's birthday, and I could not bear to be disappointed in my long-cherished plan of having the slippers at her bedside that morning. I fell asleep, exhausted with my long labor, and with my vain projects for fulfilling my wish; and next day, as I was dressing, I formed the wicked resolve to stay away from church and finish the slippers. My ideas of Sunday duties had been so completely subverted by my visit to my cousins, that I succeeded easily in silencing the compunctions of my conscience, and, pleading a headache, which was very real—for my late hours and my excitement made me feel dull and tired—I remained at home.

"As soon as the house was clear, I hurried up to my room and sat down to work, silencing my convictions of wrong by thoughts of my mother's pleasure in my pretty and useful gift; and so I sat, bending over my work for long hours, not observing how quickly the time was passing, until suddenly an exclamation of astonishment and horror sounded near me, and, looking up hastily, I saw my mother! She had come in softly, so as not to disturb me, thinking that perhaps I was asleep.

"It was a terrible moment to me—full of

shame and pain. I cannot repeat all my mother said—her severe reproof, her shocked exclamations, her self-reproaches at not having been still more watchful with me. I was sullen and rebellious at first,—for after all, I thought, it was for her I had done it; and her positive refusal even to look at the slippers, hurt and vexed me so much, that in my passion I threw them out into the street. This only displeased my mother the more, and I was for many days in disgrace. It was a sad week for all; for I would not acknowledge my fault, and mother wished me to become fully conscious of the great sin I had committed. I was very wretched, living in that way, without a loving word, or a kiss—for my father looked at and spoke to me very gravely, too—and at last I could bear it no longer, but followed my mother up to her room, one night, and sobbed out all my grief and penitence in her arms. She was very kind, and kissed me, and talked to me a long time in such a solemn, loving way, that I was completely melted, and cried myself to sleep after she had given me a good-night kiss and blessing. But my tears were not bitter, for I felt that God, too, had forgiven me.

"Since then, Marion, I have been always very careful and very watchful with regard to the Lord's day, until it has become to me, as it should be, a day of sweet rest and peace, when I may stop and look into my soul, and mark its progress; though earthly thoughts will still often intrude upon its sacredness.

"So you see, Marie, you must not be discouraged. Watch and pray, my child, faithfully and perseveringly, and every Sunday will seem sweeter to you in its right observance than the last; and we shall yet be able to say, 'This is the day the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.'

"And now see, daughter, there is papa coming in! don't you want to run down and meet him?"

So Marion, who had been very silent with interest all this while, raised her face to give her mother a kiss of thanks, and bounded away down the lawn, to walk with her papa up to the house.

FIFTH SUNDAY.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

V.

An Unhappy Day.

"I LIKE this commandment best of all, mother," said Marion, when Mrs. Hunter was ready to attend to her, on the next Sunday afternoon. "It is the easiest to obey; or, at least, I do not find it very hard to honor my father and mother!" And the child laid her head affectionately in her mother's lap, and lifted her blue eyes to her face.

Mrs. Hunter's countenance was very pleasant, with a great deal of sweetness blended with dignity; and her usual summer dress of white muslin became her well.

"Thank you dear," she said, with a smile, and stooping to kiss Marion's open brow. "And yet, are you sure you do always honor and obey us? We know your little heart is very warm

with love for us, and that you have a general reverence for our authority; but is our little daughter always obedient, without questioning and murmuring?"

Marion colored in confusion.

"I know, mother," she began; "but then it is so hard, sometimes, to have to go to school when you don't want to do it; or to sit still in the house, sewing long seams, when everything is so lovely out of doors; or to get up in the morning when you are *so* sleepy; or to keep from doing any little thing you want to do so much, just because you are told not to do it, without knowing why. Oh, dear, mother! little girls have so many troubles!"

Mrs. Hunter laughed heartily, passing her hand over and over Marion's auburn curls, at the child's comical tone of distress; and Marion, aggrieved, added, pettishly,—

"Ah, well! it is easy for you to laugh, now that you can do exactly as you please, without any control or punishment; but when you were a little girl, perhaps you did'nt like it so well."

Mrs. Hunter looked grave—not displeased; for Marion did not mean to be disrespectful.

"Have I then no control, no punishments, no

obedience to render to a parent, no obstacle to my wishes?" asked she, seriously. "You have the same idea, Marion, that most children have, that you need only to be grown up to be entirely your own mistress, and perfectly happy; but you will discover your mistake, by and by, and see that your childhood's days were happier than you think them now. You have simply to comply with the wishes of your father and mother, without taking the responsibility of your own guidance. We have hours of care and thought and anxiety, of which you know nothing; our duties are far more arduous, our troubles more enduring. Often, when we oblige you to go to school rather than take a holiday, we oblige ourselves also to remain at our business, though we would prefer to walk, or talk, or read.

"And for the fulfilment of our duties we are responsible to a higher than an earthly parent, who is sure to punish us for neglect. But we are older than you, and have learned to prize this discipline; to feel that without it our feet would wander continually from the strait path which leads to our heavenly home, and we would stray away, and be lost; so that we

would not, for the world, give up the wise and loving control of our Father: though yet His providence is often mysterious, and we have only to obey, without 'asking why.' And you, Marie, would you be willing that we should leave you entirely to yourself,—suffer you to do exactly as you please, and never restrain you in any way? Do you think you would be any happier? Would you like to try it, Marion?"

Mrs. Hunter had spoken very earnestly, and Marion listened intently. Now she nestled closer to her, and said, eagerly,—

"No, no, indeed, mother! Why, I should never be ready for breakfast if I didn't know I could have neither coffee nor butter when I was late; and I should grow up sadly ignorant if you let me stay from school as often as I wish it; and I should never know how to sew unless you obliged me to sit still. I never thought about it before, but now I know I couldn't do without you, mother. And yet it does seem a little hard sometimes. But then, when you smile, I forget it all."

"I should be sorry to have you so dependent upon me as that, Marion, that you never could do anything except from my authority. That

is a very poor spirit which requires to be compelled to do everything. You must learn to perform your duties because they *are* duties, and to be courageous, and resolute, and persevering; thus you will know how to govern yourself when the time comes when that troublesome duty will devolve upon your little head.

"But I am not scolding, dear, and you must not think I am dissatisfied with you; you are a very good little daughter, as a general thing, though you do fret a little sometimes. You have never yet grieved me as I once grieved *my* mother." And Mrs. Hunter looked very grave and sorrowful.

"Oh mother!" said Marion, deprecatingly; "but do tell me about it!"

"It cost me a great deal of suffering," said Mrs. Hunter, "and I could not forgive myself afterwards half so freely as my mother did.

"It was May-day, many, many years ago, and the school-girls were all very desirous to pass it in the woods: the weather was far too delicious, we thought, to be shut up in school, and we begged Mr. Blackstone very hard to give us a holiday. But it had rained three whole days in the week before so violently that

it had been impossible for any of us to attend school; and Mr. Blackstone said he couldn't think of giving us another whole day, just because the woods happened to be green and fragrant, the gardens and meadows a wilderness of flowers, and the skies blue and cloudless! We must be content to wait for the Saturday half-holiday, and take our ramble then. But, no! we thought that would not do at all; we wanted to have a pic-nic, and pic-nics always required the whole day; and besides, in old times, people always celebrated May-day, and why should so charming a custom be relinquished? We forgot that even in our sunny Virginia, May-day is too often damp and chilly, rather than inviting, in the fields and woods.

"At any rate, our hearts were set upon making the most of this rarely beautiful day—we had decided that it was certainly going to be rarely beautiful, the evening before, because *that* day had been so lovely; and when Mr. Blackstone refused our petition, some bold spirit among us proposed to select a party—just those of us who were most intimate—and ask our mothers to give us permission to remain away from school the next day. So we made

up our little company, and about a dozen of us went home that afternoon, determined to use all our persuasive arts to obtain the desired permission.

"Some of the girls, whose parents were very indulgent, were successful; others failed—and I was among that number. My mother thought it was very silly in me to be willing to lose my place in my classes just for the sake of a day in the woods; and besides, she always lent her support to the teacher's authority. I was very much disappointed; still I should have got over it after a while, if it had not been for the frequent taunts and sneers of the girls who had been more successful.

"A confectioner's shop in the village had been appointed as the place of meeting; and when I stopped there next morning on my way to school, and told them that I could not go with them, they laughed at me for having such a 'strict mamma,' and said they 'would not for the world be such slaves!'

"I had not independence enough to disregard such contemptuous speeches, and asked what they would do in my place.

"'Why, go without permission, to be sure!'

exclaimed Virginia Rawson, a bold, forward girl, who boasted that she could do as she liked with her parents. 'She won't whip you, will she?' she asked, with a sneer.

"'No, indeed!' said I, reddening with shame and indignation; 'my mother says I am too old to be punished in that way; she is as good and kind as any of your mothers!'

"'Prove it, then, by showing you are not so dreadfully afraid of her,' rejoined Virginia. 'She'll never know, anyhow, that you were not at school.'

"The rest of them added arguments and persuasions, and they all seemed prepared for such a delightful day: they had filled their baskets with dainties of all kinds for the feast, and they insisted so upon my accompanying them, that at last I was weak enough to yield; and we turned down the street, and across meadows and fields, until we reached the woods, which were as lovely as we had expected them to be. The air was filled with perfume, for we trod on beds of wild flowers everywhere; the birds sang sweetly, the little waterfall leaped as merrily as ever, but I was not happy.

"We did everything usually done at pic-

nics—roamed the glens and hollows to gather blossoms, with which we twined garlands for our gipsy hats; swung in the branches of the trees; waded with naked feet in the cool brown water of the 'brook,' and discovered whole beds of wild stawberries, laden with ripe fruit. We had brought sugar and cream in bottles, and we laid out a tempting repast upon a large flat rock, using broad vine leaves for dishes and napkins alike. We ate cakes and candies and fruits till I was sick of them; we laughed and talked and played till I was weary of it; there was nothing to mar our enjoyment, and every one else was in the best of spirits, but I was miserable—my gayety forced, my laugh hollow.

"The thought of this—my first act of positive disobedience, my first effort at deceit—haunted me all day, and made my heart ache, though all around me were merry; and made my steps heavy, though they trod upon flowers. I longed for the day to be over—the day which I had thought would be one of perfect delight!—so that I might go home and tell my mother all about it, for the idea of any farther concealment was unbearable. I would have submitted to any punishment rather than have gone to bed

with that heavy weight upon my heart. My companions did not suspect my feelings: I compelled myself to appear merry and light-hearted, but I cast many a weary glance through the long green alleys of the woods, watching when the brown stems of the pines would grow red in the sunset; and when at length the rays were low and slanting, and some one of our party proposed to return, I sprang to my feet, and exclaimed, involuntarily, 'Oh, I am so glad!'

"The girls looked at me in surprise, and Virginia said, 'Why, what is the matter? haven't you had a pleasant day?' 'No!' said I resolutely, for I could not keep it back any longer, 'I've been wretched all day; I have felt just like a thief: and this much I know, I will never go anywhere again without my mother's knowledge, or against her will. And I am going home now to tell her all about it; so good-by, and pleasanter memories of the day to you than *I* shall ever have!'

"And so saying, I struck off alone into the path which was the nearest way home, without heeding the loud laugh which some of my companions sent after me.

"I went straight to my mother's room—she

was wondering what kept me so late at school—and told her all about it; she was pained and disappointed, but forbore to reproach me, for she saw that my punishment had already endured long enough. And as I sat on a little ottoman at her feet, hiding my ashamed face in her lap, and sobbing out my story of a wretched day, she bent down and kissed me; and I vowed then never again to disobey her. My heart had ached all day in its attempt to escape from control; and I determined that henceforth it should rebel no more.

"And it never did, openly, Marie; though it sometimes chafed and murmured a little as yours does, daughter!"

"And mine sha'n't either, dear mother, any more!" whispered Marion, coloring a little, and putting her whole heart in the kiss with which she thanked her mamma.

SIXTH SUNDAY.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

VI.

A Narrow Escape.

"HERE is a commandment at last, mother, that I am sure even you will think isn't meant for little girls!" exclaimed Marion, lifting her head eagerly, as her mother took her seat beside her when the next "lesson afternoon," which had now become so pleasant to the little student, came around.

"It certainly is easy enough for little girls like me to do no murder; though yet, mother," continued the child, her face shadowing with a vague awe, as she spoke, "there *have* been women-murderers—haven't there? But it is so horrible!"

Mrs. Hunter answered very gravely:

"It is horrible, indeed, my daughter, to think of any one of God's creatures daring to

lift an impious hand to take away the life of another; especially to imagine a woman, who was once a fair and innocent girl, transformed by evil passion into a murderer; but, alas! such things have been, and will ever be, until the blessed time shall come when Christ's kingdom of love and peace shall be established in every heart. That is what you pray for, you know, Marion, when you say 'Thy kingdom come'—that all shall acknowledge God as their Master, and obey His divine commands. If all people loved God, they would love their fellow-men also,—and there would be no more terrible wars which slaughter by wholesale, no midnight murders in quiet houses, no vengeful men lurking in secret places, waiting for blood.

"The poor heathen worshipper would no more throw himself beneath the wheels of his idol's car to be crushed into a mangled corpse; nor would the pagan mother leave her new-born babe to be trampled by wild beasts, or plunge it into the river, into the very jaws of the fierce crocodile, in the blind hope of thus propitiating her god. No, Marie; when Christ's kingdom comes, there will be peace and love all over this troubled world. So you

see how it is, with our whole heart we should pray 'Thy kingdom come!'"

"Yes, dear mother," said Marion, with a long sigh of interest and pity.

"But, my dear, to go back to your lesson: the actual taking of life is not the only way in which this commandment may be infringed, though that is the most direct and awful mode. In the eye of the just, all-seeing God, who looks to the *motive* rather than to the deed, violent passions, bitter revenge, angry wishes, are almost, if not quite, as sinful as actual murder. Christ said that 'Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell fire,'—and whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and yet, how often do we hear people, even children, even delicate and lady-like looking little girls, call each other disgraceful names, flash angry and vengeful glances from their eyes, and even raise their little hands in fierce and passionate blows! They do not remember that they are breaking the sixth commandment, when yet they say 'I hate you! I wish you were dead!' and strike so furiously."

"Oh, mother!" said Marion in a low,

ashamed voice, "I have seen such things at school; I have even quarrelled myself; but I never thought of its being so very, very wicked! I will try, mother, and never use angry words again!"

She hid her face in her mother's lap, and Mrs. Hunter said, gravely,—

"I thought I should be able to show you that the sixth commandment, as well as the rest, was meant for 'little girls like you.' And yet I hope you have never very often broken even the spirit of it by being quarrelsome, and that you will indeed be careful to guard against it in the future. Your little temper is rather prone to be quick and impatient, and you know God loves best those who are meek and poor in spirit. Nothing is more painful and dangerous, both to the possessor and all who come in contact with it, than a hasty and violent temper: it is like a volcano, ever ready to pour forth fire and smoke at the slightest disturbance, and those living in the house with the owner of such a disposition cannot feel more secure from eruptions than the dwellers at the base of Vesuvius.

"Then it is so miserable and so sinful to be almost constantly irritated with some one; to

feel as though we wished him ill, or dead, or injured in some way, as I have known passionate people do. I remember once witnessing a terrible display of temper in a young girl only two or three years older than yourself, Marion, which had very nearly resulted in murder, and which left a lasting impression upon the minds of all who beheld it.

"It was near the close of the winter session at school, and we were all eager in pursuit of the various prizes for deportment, improvement, &c. Isabel Holland, who lived at a greater distance from school than any of the rest of us, had, at the beginning of the term, made a playful resolve to win the medal for punctuality, which, she said, would be a greater triumph to her than any one else, as she had to take so long a walk; and to the surprise and amusement of us all, she had thus far kept her word, and was the only one of us who had no 'tardy mark.' Clara Sharpe, a classmate of Isabel's, had but one; and it was very evident, by the sneering way in which she spoke of Isabel's anxiety to gain a 'paltry medal,' that she was jealous of her, and would not be at all sorry if anything should cause her to fail in punctuality, for once, at

least, so that the chances would then be equal for both.

"But April was here, now, and May-day was the time for the prizes to be awarded, so that the probabilities of Clara's success were very small. During the very last week of the term it so happened, however, that Isabel was one morning accidentally detained at home until much later than usual; and accordingly, when she at length started, she walked as rapidly as possible. As she hurried through the pine grove that surrounded the school-house, she heard the distant tinkling of the warning-bell, and quickened her steps to a run; she was hastening along, looking neither to the right nor the left, when suddenly she came upon Clara, seated beneath a tree, leisurely reading. She looked up as Isabel stopped a little, and said, with a smile:

"'Why, what makes you in such a hurry? your cheeks are all aflame. It isn't near school-time yet.'

"'Isn't it?' asked Isabel, almost out of breath; 'why, it is our clock, then, and not our cook, that was in fault. I thought breakfast was so late—it was after eight when we sat down, and I burned my mouth with my

coffee. But wasn't that the bell a moment since?'

"'No, indeed! the girls are all across the brook, gathering wild lilac and violets. I have finished my lesson, and was just going to carry my basket into the school-house, and go and join them. Shall I take yours, as you are so tired? and if you will rest here a moment, we can go together.'

"Isabel was a very generous, open-hearted girl herself, and was never willing to believe others less so. So she did not suspect treachery in the least, though Clara's character for honor did not stand very high in the school. She thanked Clara, gave her her basket, and threw herself upon the grass to await her return. Moment after moment elapsed, and still Clara did not come back; and at last Isabel began to fear that all was not right. It surely must be past nine o'clock, and there were no signs of the girls anywhere about. With a faint suspicion of treachery just dawning on her mind, Isabel sprang up and walked rapidly toward the school-house.

"We all sat studying busily, but looked up in surprise as Isabel entered—it was so unusual

for *her* to be late; and were puzzled to know the meaning of the look of scorn and subdued rage that came over her face, as with one withering glance toward the corner where Clara sat, she walked haughtily to her own desk. We all gathered around her at recess to inquire the cause of it, and, as she told the tale of meanness and falsehood, a murmur of contempt and indignation ran through our ranks. As we stood, talking in great excitement, we saw Clara Sharpe come to the school-room door.

"'There is the liar, now!' exclaimed the enraged Isabel; and even Clara's base spirit could not brook the term. She stopped in the door and denied the charge angrily, attempting to give some explanation of her conduct; but Isabel repeated the term, and turned away in the most contemptuous manner, exasperating Clara to such a degree of fury, that, scarcely knowing what she did, she seized an inkstand cut in solid glass, from a desk near the door, and hurled it with all her force at Isabel's head. Isabel sprang aside, barely in time to save her life; and the heavy stand, dashing against an angle of the wall, was shivered into a thousand pieces;—one of them flew against Isabel's cheek,

cutting a slight gash, and the blood trickled down her face, which was white with terror. A cry of fright and anger rang amidst us, and Clara, seeing Isabel stagger, and her face streaming with blood, feared she had killed her,—for, blind with rage, she had not seen what the inkstand had struck; and, uttering a scream of horror, she sprang away toward the woods.

We gathered around Isabel, and dozens of busy handkerchiefs were offered, to efface the traces of the scene. The wound was not very deep, and, as the inkstand had fortunately been almost empty, all stains and blots were soon removed, and we ceased our attentions to Isabel to pour out reproaches against the miserable Clara. But Isabel stopped us; she had seated herself on the grass, and was weeping passionately. The sudden and near approach of terrible danger had cooled her anger completely; she looked up, with her eyes full of tears, and said, imploringly,—

"'Oh, don't, girls, please! I forgive her heartily—I am sure she is feeling most miserable, and I was wrong to call her names. Pray, let us go and look for her.'

So we went, and found her at the edge of the woods, flung upon the bank, sobbing in a tempest of fear and remorse and passion. Isabel went up to her and spoke so kindly, that, though at first she was sullen, and refused all advances —her anger burning up again, as soon as she perceived that no great mischief was done—she yet could not resist Isabel's magnanimity; and looking a little softened, she said,—

"'It is very good in you not to be angry, and I am sorry I hurt you. I scarcely knew what I was doing, you enraged me so. For I did not tell you a lie; I thought school was not in; I was studying so busily that I never heard the bell, and the girls must have gone in at the back door, for I did not see them come back from the brook.'

"'Yes, we did,' said some of us,—and Isabel began to upbraid herself for her haste; but Clara went on, looking ashamed,—

"'But then it was just as bad, for I saw the girls taking off their bonnets, through the windows, long before I reached the house, and knew that must have been the bell you heard; but I wouldn't tell you, because I *wanted* you to be late! So there, now, it is all out, and I

suppose you will think I am very mean, and tell Mr. Blackstone all about it!'

"'No, I shall do nothing of the kind,' said Isabel; 'I can conceal the mark with my hair, and he need never know it. I forgive you, Clara, but I hope you will never treat any one else so. As for the medal, you are welcome to it—I could never wear it with any pleasure now.' And so we all went into the house, for the bell was ringing.

"Clara was small-spirited enough to accept the medal, but she did not wear it long among us. She never seemed happy at school afterward, and left at the end of the session. No one outside ever knew of the occurrence, but we never forgot how nearly *murder* was brought among our little band, by the ungovernable temper of two passionate girls."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Marion; but just then tea was announced, and her comments were nipped in the bud.

SEVENTH SUNDAY.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH COMMANDMENTS.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.

VII. & VIII.

Marion's Mistake.

"I HAVE learned two commandments to-day, mother," said Marion the next Sunday afternoon, "they were both so short; so now you must tell me *two* stories! But I don't understand what the seventh means."

"You are not old enough to understand it yet, my dear," said Mrs. Hunter, gravely; "but still it has a meaning even for children; that they should be very careful to avoid every thing vulgar or improper, in word and action. I have heard little girls, who should have been much better bred, for their mothers were ladies, use really indecent language when they thought they were alone; and discuss things of which they ought to have been perfectly ignorant, but which they had learned from servants, or vulgar

acquaintances. A prohibition of anything like indelicacy is implied in the seventh commandment; and a very good rule for little girls is, *never to talk to each other in a way which they would not be willing their mothers should hear.* The true charm of a girl is her modesty, and all her thoughts, and words, and acts, should be pure. No gentle, well-bred little girl will make use of any of the thousand 'slang' expressions that are so popular nowadays, and which all the rude, dirty little children in the streets have constantly on their lips. It is more excusable in them, for they have never been taught any better. A modest, retiring little girl will always be loved, whether she has beauty and talent, or not; a meek and quiet spirit is a lovelier ornament than gold or pearls, and that is what I want to see my little Marie arrayed in. There! I have given you a lecture instead of a story, haven't I? How do you like it, little girl?" And Mrs. Hunter looked down with a smile into the bright, earnest face upraised to hers.

"Very well, mother," said Marion, a little confusedly. The little lady remembered two or three phrases of her own, *picked up at school,*

which she thought her mamma would be likely to class under the order of "slang."

"I'll try and remember about it. And now about the *eighth*," she added, somewhat hastily; "did you ever know a girl who stole? *I* wouldn't steal, mother; I would be above such a thing!" said the child, proudly.

"I trust you would, my daughter," said Mrs. Hunter. "Still, don't be too positive; don't think it unnecessary to give the commandment due attention. There are more ways of being dishonest than by actual *theft*. I knew a little girl once, some two or three years ago, whose mamma gave her a long seam to sew, one afternoon. This little girl was very lively and fond of amusement; she liked much better to play with Lily May, her wax doll, which she thought so pretty with its blue eyes and flaxen ringlets, or to romp with Hartho, the great Newfoundland dog, or to swing in the great swing on the walnut-tree, than to sit still in the house sewing long seams. But her mamma told her that she would soon know how to do nothing but play, if she played always; and that it was very necessary for little ladies to learn to use the needle.

"The little girl, however, did not fully appre-

ciate this reasoning, and soon got very tired of her work. So she waited until her mother left the room, and then slipped up stairs to a room where a seamstress was busy making up house-linen, and coaxed her to finish her seam for her. She had a winning smile, and a pleading little voice, and the woman could not resist her entreaty, though she knew it was helping her to deceive. So she sewed the seam, while the little girl sat on the floor and played with Lily May. When the work was completed, she took it down to her mother, and showed it as her own, allowing her mother to praise her for her improvement, and present her with a rosy-cheeked apple for her industry! Who was this little girl, Marie?"

Marion blushed, and turned her head away in confusion.

"I should not have reminded you of it, dear," said her mother, pleasantly, "especially as you went up stairs and shared the apple with the woman who had helped you, and afterwards grew so ashamed and sorry about it, thinking of it to yourself, that you came and told me all,—only I wanted to show you that it is not necessary to *steal*, according to the common

acceptation of the word, in order to break the eighth commandment. It is as dishonest to accept *praise* which we do not deserve, as to take anything else which does not belong to us. Yet it is a practice which unfortunately is very common, especially among school-children. They will allow their older companions to work out their examples in arithmetic for them, or write their copies, or correct their exercises, and present them to their teachers as the fruit of their own unaided labor; and I have even known girls who would deliberately copy whole pages from books of essays, and hand them in on composition day as their own. Very few school-children seem to think it dishonest to peep slyly into their book, or allow others to prompt them if they do not know their lesson—yet this is very deceitful; for after they go up to class, they have no right to take the lesson from any place but their *memory;* and it is much more honorable to fail openly, than to succeed by stealth.

"It is very hard, I know," continued Mrs. Hunter, as Marion drew a long sigh, "to lose a credit-mark for perhaps a slight neglect or forgetfulness; but one's honor and a clear con-

science are of more consequence than one's place in class. It is a sad fact that there are some girls, who look very much like ladies, who will go beyond even these school peccadilloes; indeed, when children allow themselves to be dishonest in trifles, they are apt to have loose notions of honor as they grow older.

"I was sent to a large boarding-school when I was nearly grown up; and that is a fair field for the study of almost every kind of character. A young lady was there, whose looks I remember very well even now, and she will furnish a case in point. She was a beautiful girl, with very fascinating manners, and a great many brilliant accomplishments, but, alas! her moral perceptions were sadly neglected. We all knew that Adelaide Eshton was in the constant habit of evading the rules; that she sat up night after night, long past the stated bedtime, reading novels; that she stole out of her room to visit other girls in study hours; received clandestine letters, and practised all manner of small deceptions, but so dexterously that none of the teachers ever suspected her. In class she always consulted her book stealthily; on examination days she carried in her

pocket thin rolls of paper on which she had copied propositions in geometry, and the solutions of problems in algebra, and thus she passed for a clever and diligent pupil.

"There were others who did likewise, and thought it no harm; and again, there were others of us who could not but think such a life an acted falsehood, and that it was dishonest to accept commendation which was undeserved.

"Gradually it began to be whispered about in the school that Adelaide had very little respect for her neighbors' property; she did not scruple to use at will her room-mate's needles, thread, and pins; and once she was detected in wearing a richly-embroidered skirt belonging to another young lady. She explained that she only did it in sport,—that it had been sent by a mistake of the washer-woman to her room, and was so handsome that she had a fancy to wear it once, just for a joke, intending to tell the owner all about it;—and so the matter dropped.

"Not very long after this a very elegant ring, which had been, through forgetfulness, left on her washstand by one of the girls, was

missing. Emily Grant, to whom it belonged, said she remembered distinctly taking it off as she was going to wash her hands, and that she had searched every nook and corner of her room for it in vain. She finally mentioned it to Mrs. Thurston, the principal. Mrs. Thurston spoke of it very severely to the school, and to the servants, and said she should certainly pursue the strictest scrutiny till it was discovered, but that if it were returned, no exposure should be made.

"That evening, as we were all going down the great staircase to tea, some of us saw Adelaide suddenly dart into Emily's room, and reappear almost immediately. When Emily entered her room after tea, the first thing she saw was the diamond in the ring flashing out in the darkness, from just beneath the washstand, as if it had accidentally fallen to the floor. But the room had been so thoroughly searched before, that it was quite impossible the ring could have been there all the time; and there was very little doubt of Adelaide's agency in the matter. Still there was no positive proof, and some of the more charitable half believed her innocent, until another circumstance of a still darker shade occurred.

"Adelaide was asked out to tea one holiday afternoon—a great event to a boarding-school girl, away from home, among strangers—and as there was to be a large party of young people, she was anxious to appear well. Unfortunately, in the haste of dressing, she dropped her brooch, a pretty ornament of jet—she was wearing mourning for her father—and stepped on it, crushing it to fragments.

"This was a sad accident, for there was no time now to replace the loss, and of course she could not go out without a brooch for her collar. She must try and borrow one for the occasion. It chanced that there was only one other young lady at school who wore black,—a quiet, retiring girl, who had lately lost her mother; and though Adelaide scarcely knew her at all, she ventured to ask her to lend her breastpin—a very pretty one, made of her mother's hair. Amy Leonard was too gentle to refuse, though she evidently disliked parting with so precious an article, even for so short a time,—and Adelaide wore it that evening.

"What then was Amy's distress, when the next day Adelaide came to her, apparently overwhelmed with regret, and told her she had

lost the brooch! She had never missed it until she reached home, late at night, and was taking off her collar in her room, and so could not imagine whether it had dropped out and been crushed under foot in her friend's crowded parlors, or whether it had fallen in the street. She begged Amy, with tears, to let her replace it with another; but poor Amy said diamonds and pearls could not replace the loss of her mother's hair, of which she had no more, and she certainly would not suffer Adelaide to buy one of another kind because she had been so unfortunate as to destroy two in one day; she would rather replace it herself. This Adelaide knew very well when she made the offer.

"Time wore on, and the affair was almost forgotten, when one day the monitress brought Adelaide a daguerreotype and a letter, which had just arrived by post. There was always a great tumult when the letters arrived; the girls crowded round the monitress in hopes of receiving one, and the confusion of voices was equal to that of Babel. Of course all of us saw that Adelaide had received a daguerreotype of some of her friends, and gathered round her to look at it. She was busy reading her letter, after

having taken a slight glance at the picture; and presently, when she had finished, and turned to take the likeness again, she was amazed to perceive all her companions gazing at her with looks of scorn, and exchanging indignant whispers. She snatched the daguerreotype, and lo! the lady in it wore Amy Leonard's brooch!

"We had all recognized it: it was very peculiar in design, and so clearly represented that it was easy to identify it; and the faint denials of the guilty girl were speedily silenced by the contemptuous retorts of some of the rest, who were too indignant to control themselves.

"She went sobbing to her room, but was soon summoned thence to the principal, who obliged her to explain the matter. She acknowledged that the brooch was Amy's; that her mother had sent her money to have one made of her own hair, which Adelaide was to send to her as a remembrance while she was absent at school.

"After she had broken her own pin, she remembered having seen a very elegant one at a store in the town, which she instantly desired to possess; but knowing it was too expensive for her means, she formed the wicked resolve of sending Amy's brooch to her mother, noticing

that the hair of which it was composed was very nearly of the shade of her own,—and retained the money her mother had sent to pay for having one manufactured, to aid in purchasing the ornament she coveted so much.

"Mrs. Thurston was shocked—as well she might be—at the revelation of such an artful scheme of dishonesty. She wrote to Adelaide's mother to remove her immediately from school, explaining the reason of her dismissal; and in less than a week her guardian arrived to take the poor girl home, and to bring back Amy's brooch!

"This is the only case I ever knew of positive theft in one of Adelaide Eshton's position in society; still you may judge by it, Marie, that the eight commandment was not given for the benefit only of professed pickpockets and robbers. What do you think about it, little girl?"

"I shall never think again that *any* of God's commands are not meant for all of us, dear mother," said the little girl; "and I mean to watch and try harder than ever to keep them all!"

"And God will help and bless you, my little daughter," said Mrs. Hunter, bending down softly to kiss the child-face so full, just then, of holy and earnest purpose.

THE DAGUERREOTYPE PICTURE.

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EIGHTH SUNDAY.

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

IX.

The False Witness.

"MOTHER!" said Marion, looking up with a puzzled face, as her mamma took her seat beside her on the next Sunday afternoon, and seemed quite ready to attend to her.

"Well, what is it now?" asked Mrs. Hunter, with a smile.

"Why, I said last Sunday, you know, that I would never think again that any of God's commandments were not meant for all of us; but this one—little boys and girls never go to court, and be witnesses, do they? I have heard papa talk about the witnesses in trials, and how many questions they have to answer, and how they have to promise, with the Bible in their hands, to speak nothing but the truth. I shouldn't think they would dare, after that, to

bear false witness! Of course they do, though, or God wouldn't have given this command. But what does it mean for children, mother?—I believe I know, though," she went on eagerly, as her mother was about to speak. "Telling wrong stories, isn't it? saying somebody did something naughty, when he didn't at all. Isn't that it, mother?"

Mrs. Hunter smiled a little.

"That is about it, Marie," said she; and then, speaking quite seriously: "Bearing false witness means, attempting to make a person appear guilty of that of which he is innocent; and, it is all the same an infraction of the ninth commandment, whether the witness be given in a crowded court-room, or in any quiet, private place at home, or at school, or wherever the character of an innocent person may be injured by untrue accusations, or even hints and insinuations. We virtually bear false witness against our neighbor, if we even sit quietly by, when we hear any one uttering unjust remarks against another, without attempting to correct them, even though we do not join in them; for by our silence we assent to the evil that is spoken. And there is more bearing of false witness

done in that way, I imagine, by repeating and encouraging unkind reports, than in the direct sense of the expression.

"But I do not suppose that was the original meaning of the commandment at all; it was probably intended to refer directly to the giving in of false testimony, in cases of positive accusation before a judge; a crime, alas! which has been too common in all ages. You remember, I am sure, my daughter, *one* trial, the greatest, the strangest, the saddest, the world has ever beheld, when the Son of God Himself was condemned to a shameful death, on the strength of false witness borne by wicked men."

Mrs. Hunter's voice was very solemn, and Marion answered in a low tone,—

"Yes, dear mother, when they said He had boasted that He could destroy the temple, and build it again in three days; but He meant His own body—you told me about that once. And even the false witnesses could not have had Him put to death if he had not chosen it, could they, mother?"

"No, my love; He said, 'No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down of myself.' He consented to die, to bear the punishment of

the sins of the whole world, so that God need not punish us for them. How could we ever do enough for so gracious a Saviour, Marie?"

"I *love* Jesus, mother," said the child simply, and Mrs. Hunter bent over her and kissed her.

She was silent a few minutes, and then said, cheerfully,—

"I shall have to tell you, Marie, of an instance of the bearing of false witness, that once occurred to me, and caused me, perhaps, the most acute mental suffering I ever experienced,—for it was the only time I ever had to writhe under unjust suspicions."

Mrs. Hunter's face flushed even now with the remembrance, and Marion looked up indignantly, but would not interrupt her mother, who went on:

"It was all about such a silly and undignified affair, too, that it made it the harder to bear. It happened at the same boarding-school at which the incident of the hair-brooch occurred, but before that, I believe. It was during my first session at school, and although my teachers knew me to be in general an orderly and diligent pupil, they still had not known me long enough to feel that entire confidence in

my character which would prevent them from believing anything against me, unless fully proved; and as I was a gay and spirited girl, generally ready to enter into school-girl frolics, it was natural that they should act as they did afterwards.

"I was very ambitious to excel, both in my studies, and deportment; I knew I could please my mother so well in no way, as to go through the whole term without receiving a reprimand, or a fault-mark—and thus far, past the middle of the session, I had succeeded in my careful efforts to obey all the rules, and avoid everything worthy of reproof. I was beginning to feel very sanguine about it—though my satisfaction was a little damped by the conviction that such extraordinary correctness was no passport to the hearts of my companions, and that I should be much more popular with the school generally, if I came under the monitress's censure as often as they themselves did—when this trouble arose, and destroyed the fruit, to all outward effect, at least, of my three months' care.

"It was on Sunday morning in mid-winter: my companion, Lizzie Blair, was busy getting

ready for church, and I had just laid aside my book for the same purpose, when we heard a smothered tittering at our door, as of many voices, and presently a low knock. It was against the rules for the girls to go from room to room on Sunday, and the monitress had just finished her round of inspection; but when the door opened in answer to my 'Come in,' I saw a group of a dozen gathered in the hall, all laughing and whispering under their breath as though something very amusing was going on.

"It was Aurora Palmer who came in,—a merry, fun-loving girl, who occupied a room directly opposite to mine, and I saw instantly from her look of suppressed mirth that some mischief was on foot.

"'Well, what is it now?' I asked; and she said in a low, hurried voice, keeping back her laughter:

"'I want your piece of pie, Grace, directly,—yours and Lizzie's too. Give them to me quick—we've got such a famous plan—such fun! We're not going to have any more stale apple-pie for lunch after this—see if we do! Give them here!'

"'But I haven't got any,' said I; 'you know

I never eat it, so I don't take the trouble to bring it up. What are you going to do? Some mischief, if you're the leader, Rorie.'

"She laughed, and said, 'Well, then, give me Lizzie's.'

"'No, thank you,' cried out Lizzie from the closet, where she was taking down her dress; 'I shall be hungry after church, and manage to eat it, even if it isn't very nice; and you'd better do the same, Rorie, you'll get into some trouble.'

"But, Rorie only answered, 'Pooh! you're such a sobersides, Lizzie; come, Lucy, and see—it's *too* funny!' and pulled me out of the door.

"A sight ridiculous enough met my eyes. On the frame-work of Aurora's door were fastened, in a long perpendicular row, which reached from the top of the door to the floor, the three-cornered pieces of pie, which, together with a slice of bread and bit of gingercake, formed our usual Sunday lunch. The servants always attended church in the morning, so that no regular dinner was prepared, and each young lady, as she marched out of the breakfast-room, took up her plate of luncheon from a long table

near the door, and carried it up to her own room, to have in readiness when she should return from church."

"Oh, mother, how funny!" interrupted Marion, very much amused.

"It had the merit of convenience at least," rejoined her mother, "and rendered it unnecessary for the cook to spend the Lord's day in work as she would otherwise have had to do. We girls would not have had the slightest objection had the luncheon been palatable; but the cake was generally stale, the bread very thinly buttered, and the pie I never could touch in winter; it was always made of dried apples, ill-flavored and sour, and the crust like leather. The girls had murmured about it, laughed and scolded over it all the winter, but no change had been made; and as it happened to be less inviting than usual on this day, they had been more obstreperous than ever; and Aurora, always the leader in every kind of mischief, from a pure spirit of frolic rather than any evil disposition, had suggested this novel mode of attracting attention to the grievance. The pieces of pie were fastened to the door-post by means of large pins, and, though affixed point

downward, their consistency was such that none of their contents were discharged."

"How tough they must have been! Didn't you laugh, mother?" inquired Marion, unable to control her mirth.

Mrs. Hunter smiled. "Yes, I laughed very heartily," said she; "I could not help it, the whole thing was so very comical; and as we all felt aggrieved, there was a certain sense of justice in it which prevented us from seeing its lack of dignity at any time, and most especially on this holy day. I regretted my connection with it bitterly enough afterward. But then I joined the other girls who were laughing and whispering, and there was a good deal of silly chattering, and some pretty sharp abuse of Mrs. McNaughton, the housekeeper, and wonderings as to what she and Mrs. Thurston and the teachers and the monitress would say when they saw it; and then some one suggested, 'You had better take them down, Rorie, before anybody comes; there will be a terrible fuss if you leave them up, I'm sure;' but Rorie, who, as boys say, was 'full of pluck,' declared she was not afraid of anything they could do—it was time such treatment should be stopped—

the pie deserved to be hung, and hung it should be!

"She appealed to several of the girls to know if she should not leave it up,—to me especially; and I replied, 'I never should have thought of doing such a thing, Rorie, but I wouldn't be frightened into undoing it.'

"There I was wrong, very wrong; I was older than Aurora, and she was easily led. If I had chosen to use a proper influence I could have checked the whole matter, and prevented all the trouble and disgrace which followed; but I was thoughtless enough to admire her fearlessness, and glad to think that a change in our unpalatable regimen was to be procured by some means, and thus I said nothing to do away with the effect of my first injudicious remark. There was one thing, however, which they wished me to do, that I positively refused; it was carrying too far what I was beginning to suspect was but a vulgar joke after all. This was to write some verses on a placard, after the manner of an advertisement, to be hung up beside the ridiculous-looking row of pies.

"I had in those days a passion for making rhymes; my weekly compositions were often

written in verse; and there was scarcely a day in which the monitress did not bring an Album to my room, with the owner's request for 'something original.' So, as soon as the idea of the placard came into Aurora's mind, she applied to me to do the verse-making; but I refused very decidedly, and reminded her that it was Sunday, and that she had better not go too far. The giddy girl was quite wild with the freak she was determined to carry out, and would listen to no advice; and one of her friends, called Lydia Defoe, a bold, disagreeable-looking girl, whom I scarcely knew at all, volunteered to write the verses.

"So she slipped across the hall into Aurora's room: the rest of us retired into our own, and began to get ready for church. My grave little companion, Lizzie, was dressed and waiting for me; she laughed at my description of the odd spectacle outside the door, but said she was afraid trouble would come of it.

"As we passed Aurora's door on our way down stairs, when the church bells began to ring, we saw the placard fastened upon the door-post. The giddy girl had torn out the bottom of her band-box to procure paper stiff

enough; and Lydia Defoe had covered it with doggerel verses, intimating that 'pies of every age, and strength, and size,' were there to be obtained. There was a great deal of trash, neither witty nor nice, written on it; and both Lizzie and I were disgusted, and wished we could find Aurora to ask her to take it down. But she had already set out for church, so we went off, too, thinking that, perhaps, after all, nothing would come of it.

"It was a raw, disagreeable day, and the sexton had made the church unusually warm. My head began to ache before the sermon was half over, and when at length I reached my room at the School, I was obliged to go instantly to bed. I had glanced at Aurora's door, however, as I came up stairs, and saw that the whole absurd array remained just as it had been left, and supposed that it had not been seen at all.

"My head continued so bad all the afternoon that I was not able to attend church again, nor to go down to the Bible-class at five o'clock. Lizzie went down, however, and I wondered that she stayed so long; it was quite dark when I heard the footsteps of the girls coming

up to their rooms, and, when Lizzie came in, I saw at once that something dreadful had happened.

"'What is the matter? is it the pie?' I asked eagerly, and she answered, 'Yes, it is the pie; just as I told you all, there is a terrible fuss. Mrs. Thurston is fearfully angry; she's been holding a regular inquisition. Rorie Palmer is suspended for a week—no one is to be allowed to enter her room, and she isn't to come out of it; and I don't know what's to be done with the rest of you—you silly girls?'

"Lizzie was quite excited, and I listened in the greatest agitation.

"'What nonsense, to make such a fuss about a mere piece of fun!' said I indignantly; 'and to visit it so heavily upon poor Rorie! I shall go right into her room, and hear all about it.'

"So I sprang up, and ran across the hall; the room was full of girls—those who had been in the scrape, and those who had not; and Rorie herself sat on the side of the bed, looking pale, and with dark circles about her eyes, but trying to laugh it all off. I felt condemned when I saw her; she was such a young, good-hearted thing, and I felt almost as if I might

have prevented this trouble; but I went in and asked her about it, and all the girls began to talk at once, and I learned no more than what Lizzie had told me,—that Mrs. Thurston had called it a horrible desecration of the Lord's day, and talked to them in an awful way, and that it wasn't over yet.

"Rorie said she didn't care if she was suspended—she was willing to suffer for the good of the school: one thing she was sure of, there wouldn't be any more such pies for luncheon—and she would do it again! The monitress rang her bell while we all stood talking, and we went off to our rooms, hardly knowing whether to be most amused, provoked, or grieved.

"There was a tap at my door presently, and, when I said 'Come in,' it opened, and Mrs. McNaughton, the housekeeper, entered. She was a short, stout, hard-faced woman, whom I had had very little to do with, but who had always made a great pet of Aurora. She took a seat beside me, and began at once, in a very authoritative manner, to interrogate me as to my share in what she called 'the disgraceful proceedings' of the day. I did not recognize

her right to question me, and gave her but short answers, which irritated her into saying that she knew I was much more deeply implicated than I chose to acknowledge; that my remaining away from the Bible-class showed a consciousness of guilt, and that it betrayed a very mean spirit in all of us to be willing to let the burden of the offence rest upon the youngest.

"I was excessively indignant at all this—but I would not be impertinent to one so much older than myself; so, simply saying I would hold myself responsible to Mrs. Thurston for all I had done, I resolutely kept silence.

"Mrs. McNaughton left me in great wrath, and by and by the monitress came to summon me to Mrs. Thurston. I went down directly, and was received very kindly; Mrs. Thurston always seemed to take a great interest in me, and I knew I stood well in her opinion, and liked and respected her very thoroughly, though the most of the girls feared rather than loved her, and privately dubbed her 'The Brigadier'—after the usual manner of boarding-school girls. The room was dusk in the twilight, and the Principal was sitting in her great chair, erect and commanding as ever, and more than usually

grave; she gave me a searching look as I came in, and, motioning me to a low seat near her, began to question me about the affair of the morning. I told her the whole story very simply, and she dismissed me with only a slight reprimand, and a great deal of very kind and serious advice about the proper use of influence, and the vast power for good or evil one person, even a young school-girl, may exert over another.

"I felt subdued and self-condemned, and very grateful to Mrs. Thurston; and left the library full of good resolutions for the future, and hopeful that poor Aurora's punishment would be remitted, and that the whole affair would now be allowed to drop.

"What was my astonishment then, my shame and indignation and wounded feeling, when at breakfast the next morning, Mrs. Thurston requested the whole school to remain in their seats, and went on to give a summary of the yesterday's proceedings, gravely and severely stating that Aurora had been the originator of the plot, and I the most skilful aider and abettor; that I had urged her to suffer the disgraceful spectacle to remain on exhibition, and had

volunteered to write what were meant to be some very satirical verses on the occasion, which I had accordingly done! I was speechless from amazement and anger, and the Principal went on to make some very severe comments on the whole affair; and I sat there and listened before them all, and bore the gaze of curious eyes, and burnt with the vehement desire to get up and declare the lie, and *could not!*

"At last it was over, and we went up stairs. I moved on mechanically with the rest—making no answer to the eager questions pressed upon me—taking no heed of the contemptuous remarks I could not help overhearing; but pushing on steadily to my own room. When I had got half way up the great staircase, a sudden impulse made me turn quickly back. I went straight down again, and across the hall to Mrs. Thurston's room, and knocked sharply at the door. She had come up from the dining-room, and I was bidden to enter. I went close up to her, not heeding the severe look with which she regarded me, and said, in a forcibly controlled voice,—

"'Some one has told you a shameless lie about me, and it seems you did not find much

difficulty in believing it. I demand to be confronted with the liar!'

"Mrs. Thurston looked at me sternly, but I did not blench,—and presently she ordered me to summon the monitress; and when the girl came looking surprised and a little frightened, she bade her bring all who were concerned in the late rebellion to her instantly.

"A dozen or more culprits were soon ranged around the room, and Mrs. Thurston's stern glance searched each face, and rested with keenest scrutiny upon the pale and wavering countenance of Lydia Defoe. I knew in an instant that she was the false witness. Beginning with the one nearest her, Mrs. Thurston put the same short, sharp question to each:

"'Who wrote the verses on that placard yesterday?' and every girl hung her head and begged leave to decline answering.

"'The honor of a person who claims to be innocent is involved: speak, every one of you, or you leave the school to-morrow!' thundered Mrs. Thurston, and they all with one voice replied, 'Lydia Defoe!' I felt the hot color fade out of my face, but I was still wounded to the very soul to have been suspected of such

baseness, and that too, by my Principal, after the interview of the evening before; but I forgot my own feelings for a moment to pity the miserable girl who stood there cowering in her discovered shame. The others cast contemptuous glances upon her, and gathered round me to beg my pardon for refusing to speak,—they dreaded so the power of her malice; and Mrs. Thurston detained me to explain how Lydia had come to the library after I had left it the evening before, and said that she could not bear to see Aurora suffering the whole of the punishment, when another was as deeply involved in the fault. She then went on to give a very plausible version of the occurrence, making me the chief actor in it all; and Mrs. Thurston, deceived by her apparent sincerity, and knowing my habit of poetizing, believed the tale and acted upon it.

"She was very sorry for it afterwards, and made amends in every way she could; and I remembered Christ's command to forgive as we would be forgiven, and strove very hard to conquer all the bitter feelings I had had about it,—especially as I knew I deserved to suffer for even the tacit share I had borne in what

was wrong and silly at any time, but more than ever on the Lord's day.

"It is all past and gone now, years ago, Marion, and so you need not let your little bosom swell so at the mere hearing of it now. I have made an unconscionably long story of it, haven't I, little girl?—and there is Pleasance coming with tea, and your papa quite ready for it, I dare say."

NINTH SUNDAY.

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

X.

A Cure for Covetousness.

"THERE—this is the very last, the tenth!" exclaimed Marion, in a despairing tone, as her mother seated herself beside her, when another pleasant summer week had glided away, and brought again the Lord's holy day.

They still sat, as at first, in the cool open colonnade, where the brown shadows of the walnuts lay side by side with the sunbeams on the polished floor, and the sound of the waves breaking upon the shore came in on the soft air that floated through the vine-shaded windows.

The "story hour," as Marion called it, was always the hour of baby's afternoon nap, and of Mr. Hunter's *siesta*. Mr. Hunter was an invalid, and the fatigue of the long summer day was too much for his weak strength without the refresh-

ment of an hour's rest in the afternoon: so Marion and her mother always had the airy colonnade to themselves for their "talks;" and the little girl thought this the pleasantest hour of the week.

Her tone was very regretful now, as she said,—

"I'm so sorry, mother, this is the last! Now I suppose our nice Sunday talks will be over, and how shall I get along without them? The day will seem as long again!"

Mrs. Hunter smiled.

"No," said she; "if I find these talks that you like so much are productive of any good beyond the mere amusement of the hour, Marie, I shall be quite willing to continue them. I like nothing better than to please and instruct my little girl at once. And there are a great many commands of God given to us in the Bible, besides the great ten given to Moses, which will afford themes for many a pleasant and useful talk yet, Marie."

The little girl's face brightened.

"Oh, I am so glad," said she, gratefully; "I do love to have you talk to me, mother dear; and, indeed, it does make me think more about

trying to do right,—and I do try harder than I used to do, mother," added she, in a low voice.

"I believe you, my little daughter," said Mrs. Hunter, tenderly, bending down to kiss the gentle brow; "and it makes me very happy to believe you. I have no dearer wish for you than that you may be truly a child of God, and grow up into a noble and useful woman, living so as to glorify Him, and draw others to Him by the power of your example. Only you must always remember that you can do no good thing without the help of His grace, which He gives to all those who ask for it with humble, earnest hearts.

"And now for your commandment: '*Thou shalt not covet:*'—you know what it means, Marie?"

"Yes, mother; that we must not wish for anything that isn't ours, but be content with such things as we have."

"Yes; and when we find covetous desires creeping into our hearts, pray for help to shut them out, and resolutely set ourselves, instead of looking longingly upon what we deem the better condition of some, to think of the infinitely harder lot of others, and thus be thankful rather than repining."

"It is hard work, though, mother, when one wants anything very much," said Marion hesitatingly.

"Yes, dear, I know it is," answered Mrs. Hunter, "and like other hard work, to be done rightly only by God's help; only by really believing with our hearts that our heavenly Father is both wise and kind, and gives each one of His children exactly what is best. Yes, Marie, no one knows better than I do the difficulty of obeying the command 'not to covet.' Discontentment with my own lot was my great temptation when I was a child, and I was constantly thinking if I had this or that thing which my little friends possessed, I should be much happier than I was; and sometimes I was wicked enough almost to think God unjust and unkind in denying it to me. I remember, however, one day's experience, which nearly cured me."

"Tell me about it, please, mother!" said Marion.

"It was when I was about thirteen or fourteen," Mrs. Hunter resumed, "just the age when a girl begins to think most about her looks and her dress, and I was in a continual

state of dissatisfaction with regard to mine. My father met with several losses in business about that time, which made it necessary for us to be economical, and it was matter for perpetual discontent with me that I could not have as many or as elegant dresses, bonnets, and mantles as some of my companions were indulged with. This wrong and foolish spirit prevented me from taking any pleasure in the society of my little friends; I would always send an excuse if my mother would allow it, rather than attend any of their little gatherings in a plainer attire than theirs. At church, even, instead of being reverent and interested in the solemn services, my heart was full of envy and covetousness, as my wandering glance fell now upon a dress, now upon a hat, prettier or more expensive than mine. Of course an ill-spent Sunday brought an ill-spent week; and the same sinful feeling followed me to school, and made me often cross and unamiable towards my companions, who would look at me in surprise, not knowing how they had offended me.

"All this made me very unhappy, and gave my mother the greatest pain. She tried constantly to make me see how ungrateful I was to

God in thus refusing to be content with the many blessings He had bestowed upon me, and continually repining because they were not more. She read to me those parts of God's word in which He plainly declares riches to be a burden rather than a blessing; and reminded me that it was 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,' rather than the outward adorning of gold and pearls and costly array, that was pleasing to his eye. It was all of no avail: so long as I saw, or fancied I saw, that one's beauty was heightened by the aid of dress, that the most attention was paid to those who wore silk and velvet, that the acquaintance of those who lived sumptuously was most sought after, so long my vain spirit refused to cease its murmurings.

"Then my mother tried to convince me that this was a mistake of mine; that since the good opinion of the world was all I cared for, it was not at all necessary that I should be arrayed like a peacock in a thousand colors, to obtain this; that really sensible people would admire me all the more for being dressed with simplicity; and that all sorts of people would admire me sufficiently if I were pleasant and entertaining and obliging.

"But I could not believe that she was right in her opinion of the matter, and went on making myself miserable all the year round, and having a special spasm of distress and indignation at the beginning of every season when new bonnets, cloaks, dresses, mantles and furs were chief themes of discussion among my companions at the fashionable school I attended. How foolish and how wrong it all seems now—to give so much thought and care to the fading garments in which we clothe these perishable bodies, while so often, the *soul-culture* is miserably neglected; to be so particular about the shape of a sleeve or the fall of a flounce, when our Saviour wore a seamless coat, and had not where to lay His sacred head!

"But it was the great thought of my life for a year or more then, and I managed to make both myself and my mother miserable about it. One afternoon in particular, we had an extremely unpleasant discussion of the one never-ending, disagreeable subject. I had been invited to join a party of my companions on a pleasure excursion to a beautiful island, some miles down the river, where we were to dine in the open air, gather wild flowers and berries, and ramble

about amid the rocks and trees to our hearts' content.

"I wanted very much to go: living in town as I did, a day out of doors was a great treat; the steamboat trip would be delightful, and the prospect of gathering real wild flowers, as many as I wanted, was charming. But as usual, my old enemy, a dread of not appearing so well as the rest, took possession of me, and I said I would not go unless I might wear my best dress, which was a very delicate tissue, easily torn or soiled.

"'I know it isn't suitable,' said I obstinately, in reply to my mother's suggestion of its unfitness, 'but it is the only passable dress I have. The silk I wear in the afternoon is all faded; I have torn my light de laine; the damp would take all the stiffness out of a muslin; and I have nothing else. You would not have me go in a calico wrapper?'

"My mother took no notice of my bitter tone, but said kindly, 'No, my dear, but I think your white cambric will be both pretty and suitable; that is what I advise you to wear.'

"'You know I detest that dress!' said I, passionately.

"'Yes, and I know why you detest it;

merely because I could not afford you an embroidered muslin, like the one Mrs. Gresham bought for Cordelia at the same time. I am ashamed and grieved that my daughter should allow such paltry feelings to obtain possession of her!'

"My mother spoke with unusual excitement, and I sat in angry silence; presently she said, quite calmly,—

"'There is no need to talk any more about it. I desire that you shall go on this excursion, and that you wear the white cambric dress. Remember to be quite ready in time to-morrow!'

"She left the room as she spoke, and I took up my work—a pocket-handkerchief I was embroidering; but I did not accomplish much at it; my heart was swelling with bitter feelings—not towards my mother, who I knew would have denied herself anything for the sake of gratifying me, but against God, and those whom He had favored more highly than me.

"I went to bed, miserably unhappy, for though I had knelt and repeated my usual prayers, I had not prayed in earnest; and I awoke in the morning quite determined to be miserable all day, and enjoy nothing. My

good mother was very gentle with me, and came up to help me dress; and when the simple white frock was put on, my hair beautifully braided by her own skilful hands, under my broad gipsy hat, and my plain black mantilla assumed, I read in her kind eyes that she, at least, thought me pretty enough, and I was fain to put away all my bad feelings, and with them the unlovely frown from my brow; and throwing my arms around her, I whispered, penitently,—

"'There, dear mother, I won't be naughty any more; I'm going to be just as contented and merry as possible all day!'

"'That is my own dear daughter now!' said she, kissing me a most affectionate good-by; and I went away down the street to the house of one of the party where the rest were to meet, with a light step, and a light heart, determined to let nothing disturb my peace.

"My resolution was put to the test, when I entered Mrs. Gresham's elegant parlors, where some twenty young girls were assembled, all gaily dressed, with flounces, and embroidery,—some of them with thin slippers—I wore high morocco boots,—and others with a profusion of

jewelry; but I sent back the irritated feeling that suddenly swelled in my breast, and made and received greetings in the most cheerful way. I did not even lose my temper when Cordelia Gresham said, with a not very pleasant smile,—

"'Why, you have come prepared for wind and weather, haven't you, Lucy? It isn't going to be a regular pic-nic, you know, but a pleasure excursion. I put on this barège because it is the most becoming thing I have,—and of course I must wear slippers to match it. *I* don't intend to climb about among rocks.'

"She tossed her head with a disdainful air as she spoke; but I only laughed good-naturedly, and said, 'Well, *I* do, then!' and left her to join a group of girls who were more agreeable to me than Cordelia, with her fine lady airs, had ever been.

"The 'boys,' as we called the Academy lads, came soon, all in the highest spirits, and we set off to walk down to the steamboat wharf, laughing and chatting in anticipation of a delightful time.

"We were soon on board the pretty little boat and dashing gaily through the blue water, leaving a long line of snowy surf, which sparkled

with diamond brilliance in the sunshine, behind us. There was an awning arranged on the deck, so that we were well protected from the heat, and a very merry hour we had, all scattered about in groups, as we liked best, laughing and chatting, watching the beautiful shores as we glided swiftly by, or bending over the railing to see the great wheels cut the dark water, and dash it off in white showers, making mimic cascades, which followed us all the way.

"We reached Rock Island before noon, and, after we had landed, stood upon one of the great grey boulders which had given the pretty little spot its name, to watch the little steamer plowing its way on down the river, its long white 'wake' glittering behind it; and when it was almost out of sight, we scattered about the island, on little exploring tours, climbing up great craggy heights to look for rock moss, gathering countless beautiful wild flowers in pretty shady dells, and searching for a flat stone big enough to serve for a dining-table.

"This last was presently discovered, and we all set ourselves to work to arrange luncheon in the most charming rural style—the boys making themselves very busy in gathering broad leaves

for dishes, unpacking baskets, paying us funny compliments on our taste and skill in arrangement, and otherwise helping and hindering us. I had quite forgotten my intended unhappiness, and only wondered, in my exhilaration at the loveliness and novelty of all my surroundings, that any one could wear a discontented face at so charming a place as Rock Island. But I noticed that Cordelia Gresham was not enjoying anything in spite of her 'becoming' dress, and her pretty rosetted slippers; *because* of them rather, for of course she could not go about among the rocks and bushes in such attire, and was obliged to sit still on the sunny banks, which, though green and soft, were not very comfortable in the noonday heat, while the rest of us rambled about at will. Thus she had lost her temper before dinner time, and took exception to every thing when we began to arrange the table.

"Cordelia was not quite alone; there were several others of the party who had sacrificed their freedom to good looks likewise, and kept her company in her voluntary confinement to one spot. I really pitied them, as now and then a party of us passed them, sitting perched

up on their high bank in disconsolate grandeur, and felt ashamed to remember, that if it had not been for my mother's good sense I should have been equally deprived of enjoyment by my own folly.

"'I only wish I had been as sensible as you,' said one and another of my companions to me, in the course of the day, as their thin dresses were caught and torn in the briery thickets, or stained with the juice of the ripe, pulpy berries; or when the sun scorched their faces, ill protected by bonnets, intended for anything rather than country rambles. I felt quite at ease in my broad gipsy hat, and *washable* cambric; and, inwardly resolving to trust my mother's wisdom unreservedly for the future, gave myself up heartily to the enjoyment of the day.

"Late in the afternoon, as a party of us were strolling about on the narrow beach, seeking for shells and colored pebbles, we saw our little steamer plowing her way down the river again towards us, and presently, as we stood watching her, she rounded in towards the little wharf on the island, and seemed preparing to land another party. The boat made a great many little trips

up and down the river, during the day, and was not to stop for us till seven o'clock. We did not know who these people were who were coming to divide the possession of our lovely island with us, and we did not like to seem to be scrutinizing them, so we turned back, and went up towards the sloping green terraces in the heart of the island, where we had left the rest of our companions.

"We found them just preparing to get up a dance on the beautiful green turf. Cordelia was the chief mover of the plan: she was heartily tired of sitting still, and although she considered it hoydenish and unamusing to ramble over rocks and among thickets, she thought dancing on the greensward very rural and picturesque. The set was already made up, so we did not join them, but stood leaning against the trees, and looking on, while we rested.

"It seemed pretty hard work;—the turf was thick and soft, and impeded their motions; they stumbled over roots and bits of loose stone, and it made them breathless to sing and dance at once, for they had no music. So, after looking on till we were quite rested, we proposed games; the boys, very few of whom knew anything

about dancing, warmly seconded the motion, and soon all except the persevering 'quadrillers' were engaged in that merriest of games, 'Fox and Geese.' There was so much laughing and running, playful screams and shouts of mirth, that when the quadrille was finished several of the dancers came over and joined us; Cordelia, however, haughtily retired to her seat on the roots of a great oak, and two or three of the girls who admired and imitated her fine-ladyism, followed her.

"I went up and asked them if they would not play:

"'No, thank you,' said Cordelia haughtily, 'we gave up romping when we ceased to be children'—and so I left them to find what enjoyment they might in their exclusiveness, and rejoined the merry, frolicsome, but certainly not rude game.

"Meanwhile, the strange party had come on shore, and, attracted by our noisy mirth, came over to the part of the island where we were making such merry sport. As they drew near, some of us recognized several of the ladies and gentlemen as acquaintances from our own town; and, after greetings had been exchanged, they

remained standing about to watch our game, and now and then remarking, in a low voice, upon something which attracted their attention. Two very pleasant-looking gentlemen were standing just behind me; and as there was a sudden pause in the game to decide some question which had arisen as to its rules, I heard one of them say to the other,—

"'They seem to be enjoying themselves—but did you ever see children dressed in such a style for a pic-nic amongst rocks and woods? It is absurd,—the lack of sense which mothers show nowadays about their children's dress. See how all those flounced skirts are torn and draggled! look at those bonnets, covered with lace and flowers, hanging on the trees yonder! I see but one child here who seems to have a sensible mother at home, and that is this one—see, with the thick white dress, and the gipsy hat, tied by its blue ribands to her arm—'

"I did not hear any more, for just then some one ran in front of me, making me *the third*, and I had to spring inside the ring; but my cheeks flushed, both with pleasure, that my mother should be complimented by a stranger,

and shame, to think that, had I had my own way, I too should have been included in his ridicule.

"It was getting late, meanwhile; the sky was all aglow with the sunset glory, and as we stood watching the beautiful clouds, the little steamer once more came puffing up to the island. We had a lovely sail home; the clear waters of the Potomac reflected all the changeful hues of the sky, and we seemed rushing through a sea of gold and fire. It had been a most delightful day, and its events served to cure me, in great measure, of my besetting sin of covetousness. I ceased to long for the richer possessions of others, when I found that they brought with them pride and discontent, rather than happiness. I could envy Cordelia Gresham no more, as I watched her, sitting sullenly apart, mortified at her failure in attempting to make a grand sensation that day, and distressed by the loss of a beautiful bracelet which had accidentally dropped from her arm into the water, and was irrecoverably gone.

"Years after, I learned to keep the tenth commandment from a holier motive—a simple desire to please God. Will my little daughter

try to make this her motive for endeavoring to keep *all* His commands?"

Mrs. Hunter's tone was very earnest and tender, and Marion said, softly,—

"Yes, mother," and lifted up her face and kissed her.

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